Eternal Contrasts

Alfred Handley Chipman Morse

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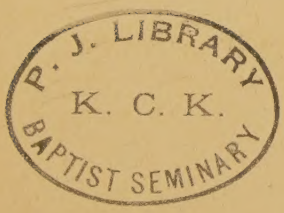

ETERNAL CONTRASTS

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ETERNAL CONTRASTS

A SERIES OF ORIGINAL DISCOURSES

By
ALFRED HANDLEY CHIPMAN MORSE, D. D., Ph. D.

Sermons
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To
My Parents
and to
My Wife's Parents
all of whom have given to me of their best
this volume is affectionately dedicated.

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FOREWORD

We live in a world of contrasts; and these contrasts are noted on every side. They are not only in things external to ourselves, but they are also internal, in our moods and dispositions. It is this which makes the joy of life, as also its tragedy. It accounts for the clash of things among people and nations.

Contrasts are not to be deplored. They have a rightful place in this kind of world; and the art of good living is so to adjust oneself to these contrasts as to preserve one's courage. This is what makes for character; and good character is entirely possible in this day and age and world; but only to those who are willing to be patient and to strive day by day for its achievement.

Good character is riches; and if people will wisely adjust themselves to the stern contrasts in this world, they may all become millionaires in character.

Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise in outward things whate'er we may believe.
There is an inmost center in ourselves where Truth abides in fulness;
    While around, wall upon wall,
The gross flesh hems it in, this perfect clear conception which is Truth.

A. H. C. M.

Denver, Colorado.

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I

ETERNAL CONTRASTS

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

—*Romans 6: 23.*

ETERNAL CONTRASTS

THERE are two great realities in the universe; the one is God, and the other is sin. And these two are in deadly conflict, and the warfare will go on to a finish. It will last until there shall be no more sin.

But what is sin? Is it simply the absence of good, as some wise men say? Both experience and the Scripture are against this view. Experience knows nothing of sin in the abstract; it knows only sinful people. And the Scripture has personalized sin. It says that sin is a ruler, with obedient subjects; a general with an army in a great campaign. It is this latter conception in the Scripture before us.

The wicked man, then, is a man "in service." He has entered that service as a soldier enlists in the army. Henceforth, his duties are prescribed, his freedom is curtailed, and he must come and go at another's command. Is not that true in the service of sin? Let him answer who has learned the drill. Let him be heard who has spent years in that tyrant's service. And the soldier receives two things; his "keep" during the service, and a paltry payment at last. This is true, also, of the servant of sin. He receives two things, and the both of these are death. All this is contained in this passage of Scripture.

But is death the wages of sin? I am not so espe-

cially concerned about physical death, the separation of soul and body; that may be in the nature of things. I rather think that it is. So far as I know, all things in this world go in twos—up and down, east and west, sunrise and sunset, summer and winter, male and female, birth and death—everything seems to be in twos in our world; and it may be as natural for people to experience physical death as for leaves to fall in the autumn. I am not thinking of physical death.

But I speak of a more fearsome thing; the separation of the soul from God; a growing inability to think good things; an increasing agony of conscience abused; the loss of quiet in the soul. This, I submit, is the daily ration of all in the service of sin, and this is the final pay; this is both wages and "keep." It is the thing that is contracted for and earned; it is dues, and can be claimed; and it is also payment in kind.

But what is payment in kind? An illustration will help us in this: Here is a company with a great work to do, and a numerous staff of workmen; and these workmen live in the company's houses, buy at the company's stores, and purchase at the company's prices. The men do not ever see any money, and the company has all the gain, both in labor and in trade. That is payment in kind, and that is the method of sin. He enlists his servants, appoints the tasks, and has all to say concerning rewards.

And further, sin does the paying. Here is where we have made great mistakes. We have thought that God

does the paying; and that if a man does wrong, God gets square with him by letting loose upon him a dreadful ruin. It is not so. The wages of sin is death, and sin himself does the paying. He pays the daily rations and appoints to each his shameful memories, his unhappy and ineffective present, his misery and degradation, and, finally, his death, which I have said is integrated evil; wickedness woven into the very fiber of his soul; and separation from good, and even its dislike.

And sin is actual wrong-doing. It is not merely desire and inclination and bent toward wrong. These are but the beginning. "Desire, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is full grown, bringeth forth death."[1] That is, when the campaign is over, when the servant is mustered out, the end is death. This, says the Scripture, is "eternal" —fixed, and unchangeable, and filled with intense remorse.

Today, sin does not bring in all its pains and exact its full retribution, and sometimes it seems even to be crowned with success. The cause is obvious. This world is a place for the formation of character. It is meant to be a place for trial, where we can act freely; where we are free to do wrong as well as to do right; and where we may become virtuous; but only through temptation. Such a purpose requires that sin and wrong-doing should not receive their full harvest at

[1] James 1: 15.

once. If they did, and every sin were immediately visited with its awful penalty, there would be no trial. We should all be afraid to act. In such a world, fear would suspend liberty and supersede conscience, and no man would be virtuous because he chose it, but only because he feared to do else than good. Such is not our world. Here, sin does bring misery; but the cup is sweetened, and vice has pleasure in its train. Moreover, we live in a world where we may forget ourselves, and quiet the mind with false hopes, and find a deceitful joy in a wicked way. This cannot be done in the final state. There, the mind will be exposed to its own evil agency, and nothing will intervene between the transgressor and his awakened conscience. He shall sin without restraint, and each sin shall be visited with its swift and full retribution. He shall sin, because it is his nature to do so. In that state, there shall be no respite, no diversion, no sleep to make one forget for a time his agony; but day and night the same reproaching voice will cry within, and unrepented sin will fasten its unrelenting grasp upon the ever-working soul. That is what I mean by eternal death. I mean the separation from God, the absence of restraint upon wrong, as we know it here, and eternal companionship with one's own evil self. These are the wages of sin. I am no prophet of the future world. I only want to show how terribly sin will one day work out its misery, and how dangerous it is to argue from present power to escape its consequences, that

we may escape them to the last. No evil follows beyond the grave except sin itself. Poverty and disease and scorn and bereavement, these cease at the grave. But the evil within us, the guilt, and the mind depraved, and remorse at wasted good, these will go with us as a consuming fire to avenge the soul. This is what I mean by eternal death; and this is the wages paid by sin.

But now let us turn to the brighter side. If the wages of sin is death, the contrast is this: The free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Then eternal life is a gift. It is not wages. It is not something that one can demand, nor that which can be claimed as due. When these few years are finished, there is no continuance which any man can claim as his by right. If life is ours upon those sunny plains, then that life is ours by gift alone.

Now, there are different words to express the idea of a gift. But there is only one word that conveys the idea of the free grace of this text. The doctor leaves a dose for his patient. There is a sense in which that is a gift; for when one consults a physician, he pays him for his counsel—medicine or not. The doctor may give one medicine to use, and there is a word in the Greek for that; but it is not the word which is used in this place. There is another word, which denotes a bounty or benefaction, such as a sovereign might bestow upon a subject. I can illustrate what this means: When the war with Spain was past, this

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Government desired to encourage the industry of Cuba. But how? Should we admit her sugar free, to the hurt of producers here? or should we give the Cubans a bounty upon each ton of sugar-beets produced upon her soil? The latter was chosen, and the bounty awarded was a kind of gift; but it is not the idea in this text. There is another word which means a gift. It refers to something presented as a kind of honor, as when the Wise Men presented their gifts to the Infant Babe,[2] or as when Harvard University gave an honorary degree to a German prince a few years ago. That degree was a gift, but it was not the kind to which reference is made in this text. Eternal life is the gift of God, but it is not like the doctor's dose, nor the statesman's salve, nor the university degree. It is a free gift for no reason outside itself.

And will you notice that it is God's gift? It is not something to which one grows. It is not a natural achievement, nor the outcome of high evolution. All gifts are the gifts of God. And when shall we learn that there is only one Giver in all the universe? But this high gift, in an especial sense, proceeds from God, the source of every blessed thing. The worlds may have been made through Christ, but the source of all things is God; and eternal life is the gift of his grace. That is an important distinction.

There are gifts of God that are in the order of providence. The procession of the seasons with their

[2] Matthew 2: 11.

waving harvests, the success of honest toil, the prosperity that comes from industry—these are gifts of providence and rewards in the nature of things. So with the health we enjoy and the comforts of home, and the faculties of the mind; these are gifts, and they also come from God. But the gift of which I am speaking today is the gift of grace. And the gift of grace is something more than love and something more than providence. Little glimpses of this we find within ourselves. Here, for instance, is a father who toils hard all day, and his bones are filled with weariness, and his flesh seems dragging from him; so long has seemed the day, and so heavy the burden of his work. But, on the way home, he bethinks himself of his prattling babe, and the thought puts new life into him. In his utter fondness for his child, he steps into some trinket-shop and buys for the child some trifling toy. He knows she will be glad, and he will delight to see her. And he hurries home, his weariness half forgotten in his little act of love. That gift he takes is not essential to the comfort of the home; is not something to which the child has claim. It is a pure gift, the gift of a father's grace. So with eternal life, which is the gift of God to men.

And this gift of God to men—it is eternal life! Think of that! The possibility of retaining sense and memory and consciousness beyond the grave, and taking with one his joy in good. Think of that! To step through the grave as through a parted curtain,

and to discover that one has only passed from one room into another, from a vestibule into a temple! And there to see eternal things!

And this eternal life will be essentially like this, only fuller and deeper and more beautiful; but the same old lines of honesty and peace and industry and right and love will be projected into new surroundings, and we shall be free from the bondage of evil, because there will be no evil there; and every noble impulse will be stimulated and every high desire will be possible of attainment; and we shall have the fullest sense of God. That is the eternal life whose buddings we feel in the soul today; and that is the gift of God. It is like the country boy to whom, through some good fortune, a privilege is given to cross the ocean and visit a world's great exposition. He is still the same lad, but he walks amid the triumphs and the mysteries of an undreamed world, and his heart can scarcely believe what his eyes behold.

So with us if we shall ever attain to eternal life. We shall find ourselves in an environment which the eye hath not seen nor the heart imagined. Think of that! To visit other worlds, to step from star to star, to explore the universe, and to be a son of God! Nevermore to die! To learn and keep on finding out; to be a companion of those who are adjudged worthy of eternal life, the choice spirits of eternity; to converse with them—and about what? The events of the world's past history? Yes, perhaps, for a little while,

but more about the events which shall then be transpiring in another world; and to meet with Jesus! not the humble teacher of his earthly days, but the exalted Saviour, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. This is eternal life, and this is the gift of God.

But remember, this is through Jesus Christ. It is in Christ, illimitable, unbounded, and unchangeable. But it has its channel. It is not a vague and nebulous life diffused through space, to fall on every one. It is all gathered up in Christ. Show me any other way, and I will yield; but I know only of eternal life in Jesus Christ. It is the gift of God, though it is not through God. It is to be had only in Jesus Christ and through him. That is what the Scripture says: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that . . ." What? Many people would like to make a leap right here to a great conclusion—that "all men might have eternal life." But that is not what it says, and not what I can preach. It is this: "That whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have eternal life." [3]

This great fact of life, at least, is shut up in Jesus Christ; and there is not a word in all the book that gives the shadow of a hope for one who does not believe in him. It is folly to hope for this life except in its orderly process as it pours through its given channel.

Then how shall we get this life? And here I swing

[3] John 3: 16.

back into familiar ways, and preach the old gospel of faith. God has loved the world, and appointed life in Christ. But the power for this is procured by faith, and this is ever the work of man. God provided the life; that is step number one. And man accepts that life; that is step number two. And the both of these are needed.

Martyrdom would be cheap if it could give us eternal life; but the way is not through martyrdom. Penance would be easy if life could be had only in that way, but eternal life is not purchased by penance. It would be easy to take the vows of poverty and chastity and unselfish obedience, if these could procure this life, but these are of no avail. How, then? By faith, which takes hold of the proffered grace; by trust that unites the soul to Christ and that enthrones him in the human heart as Lord! That is the beginning, the process, and the end.

The contrasts of this text are these:

Sin, and God.
Wages, and Gift.
Death, and Eternal Life.

II

CONTRASTS IN CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

—*John 16: 33.*

CONTRASTS IN CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

THIS illustrates the candor of Jesus. He tells His disciples plainly that in a world like this, peace may be had, but that tribulations are bound to be had; that tribulations just naturally come, while peace is an achievement; and that the victory of Christian living is in the attainment of peace despite tribulation. These are the contrasts in Christian experience.

Here is where good people often mistake. They conceive that peace is a Christian inheritance, a perquisite of Christian experience, a thing that belongs to them by right; and that they ought never to encounter tribulation. I had a letter, the other day, that illustrates this. A friend of mine is a preacher, and he is located in what he regards as a difficult place. In a former letter he had told me of a new church edifice his congregation had recently erected, and dedicated without a dollar of encumbrance; and this he regarded as indisputable evidence of the goodness and guidance of God. Within a few days I read in the papers that this new edifice had been destroyed by fire—and that through a careless mishap; and then came the letter to which I refer, in which my friend bemoaned the mystery of what had occurred. His thought was that God ought to govern his world by

preventing tribulation for Christian people, and mishaps of this kind to all places of worship.

But that is not the method of God, at least in this kind of world. He nowhere promises to make the pathway of obedience and faith to be easy. His blessings are often the blessings of adversity and trouble, and no one ought ever to question the goodness of God, simply because he encounters hard times. These are in the nature of things. I have just laid down a new book. It is the autobiography of Wilfred T. Grenfell, and one chapter he begins with these words: "No human life can be perfected, nor even lived, without troubles." And this is what Jesus said, "In this world ye shall have tribulation." Instead of a person being puzzled because he encounters tribulation, he ought rather to be very suspicious if it never occurs. There is a beneficent value in trouble.

In one of his books, Doctor Jowett says three very wise things about tribulations. First, that they are wholesome. When we were children in school, we had no fondness for the examinations, and especially if they were sprung upon us without ample time having been given for preparation. But now we can see that they were all right, and a vital part of a good school system. So it is in the larger examinations in the discipline of life. They reveal a man to himself; show him just how much he knows, and where his weak places are; and if God is at work in our lives, as we believe that he is, then surely he has a right to

prescribe his own tests and the times and places where they shall occur.

Again, tribulations both strengthen personal character and deepen it. The finest product in this world is the man who has bravely endured in a difficult place; and the harder the place, the better. The luxurious life seldom produces great characters. The man of soft clothing usually lives in kings' houses, but the man who is worth while is likely to be clothed in camel's hair and a leathern girdle, and to have his home in the desert. It is through much tribulation that one enters into the Kingdom.

Tribulation also is good because it develops character, and brings out a beauty that might otherwise never appear. You have seen the photographer at work, and you know how he brings out the lines of his picture. He places the plate, which he has exposed to the light, in a well-prepared liquid, and then makes that liquid sway back and forth over the plate until the image is fixed and all the lines are disclosed. And that is what God does with his people; what the psalmist had in mind when he said, "O my God, all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me"; what Samuel Rutherford meant when he wrote to Lady Forrest: "I hear that Christ hath been so kind as to visit you with affliction. This is because he would have more service of you. He is your loving husband, and would draw you into a sweeter love."

That, in substance, is the thought of Doctor Jowett,

and so I say, we must not be bewildered because we encounter tribulation, for the Lord nowhere promises smooth things for his people. Instead, he appeals to the heroic; asks for those who can endure hardness without losing heart; who can encounter the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune without losing patience; who can take up their crosses and follow him. Of course, people are not to go out of their way to court tribulation, nor to bring it down on themselves by foolhardy daring. But in the midst of hard times they must yet have faith. And I tell you, on the authority of the word of the Lord, and this verified by the experience of all his saints, that there is nothing wrong in the things we encounter. The wrong is in the spirit with which they are met.

The question is as to how there can be in the same life both tribulation and peace; as to how one can encounter adversity and have things constantly thwart him, and at the same time have the experience of peace in his heart. That was the experience of Jesus, and that is what he says may be the experience of others. And the key to such an experience, he says, is twofold: It depends upon where one dwells and what one believes. That is what this Scripture says: "These things have I spoken unto you"—that is what one is to believe; "that in me"—that is where one is to dwell. In other words, the secret of peace is to dwell in Jesus, and to believe what he says. The alternatives are to dwell in him or to dwell in the things that

transpire; and if one dwell in the events of one's life, one is both helpless and hopeless, and peace is out of the question: out of the question if things go well, and especially out of the question if things go ill, as they are bound sometimes to go.

I think I can illustrate this: Several years ago, I was in England. And when in my trip I came to London, I put up at a large hotel in the busiest part of the city. It was a noble place as hotels go, but the noisiest I have ever been in. The great buses drove me mad, and I thought they would also drive me insane. I could not hear myself speak in the daytime, and I could not sleep at night. At the end of two days I removed to a street several blocks away, into rooms overlooking an old, peaceful garden; and there the noise of the city traffic at night was like a distant rumble that actually assisted in sleep. That is what I mean. The alternatives are to dwell in Jesus or to dwell in the world. And if one dwell in the latter he shall have only tribulation, but if he dwell in the former, he may have tribulation, but it will be like the distant rumble of the London traffic. In addition, he will have a peace that envelops it all.

I read of a woman, one time, who had a beautiful home. She was a woman of unusual quiet and peace, and one day she explained her secret by telling that she had in her home a room which she called her "Chamber of Peace." Into it she never entered with a bitter thought or an angry word. It was consecrated

to the presence of Jesus. Its walls were of a neutral tint, and its furniture was all in white. One time she had in her home a world-weary woman for a guest, and she took her into this quiet room in the spirit in which she always entered it herself. And, as they sat together, the distracted woman also found peace. At night when that woman awoke, she seemed to be under the shadow of the Almighty. When she went to her home she said that she, too, must have a room like that. And because her house was filled with her family, the only available place was the attic, with its unfinished boards. But she laid some half-worn carpet on the floor, covered the rafters with unbleached cotton, and brought in a small table and two very cheap chairs; and this became her chamber of peace. So peace does not depend upon plenty. And day after day she went apart from her duties and sat for a time at the feet of Jesus; and his peace was abundant. One day her little boy seemed unusually annoying and instinct with wrong, and she said, "I'll take you up to the chamber of peace, where the angels are." And after explaining to him the meaning of the room, she left him there. When he came down, he said to his mother, "That's a good place; it's a good place to leave your naughty." One day, as this woman came from her chamber of peace, her neighbor came in. She was a bride of but a year and a half, but she was in a fury, and giving the woman her key, she said: "Give this to my husband. I'm going away, and I'll

never, never be back!" The good woman said: "It is yet two hours until your train will leave. Come into my chamber of peace, where I go when I'm fretted and worried." She took her up to her attic and explained the meaning of the room, and left her there. Fifteen minutes before her train was due, the young woman came down and said: "Give me my key. Your room has conquered." So it depends, I am saying, on where you dwell. You are bound to have troubles; and if you dwell in them, there is no peace. But if you will dwell in Jesus, then a peace that passeth understanding will envelop both you and your troubles; will keep your heart and thoughts in peace.

I like the way this Scripture reads: "In me" comes before "in the world." That is, the shelter is pointed out before the storm, in order that one may be in that shelter when the storm shall break. When one is in the shelter, he really is not in the storm. He may see its fury and hear its swirl, and it may move him strangely, but it does not hurt. That is what the Lord meant by dwelling in him; for though peace may be a state of mind, it is primarily a place, a veritable world. Do you not recall those two women whom Jesus healed, the one who stole up behind him and touched his garments, and the other who was a sinner? In both of those instances Jesus said not, "Go in peace," as our Bibles read; but, "Go into peace." [1] The difference is great. "Go in peace" might refer to a

[1] Luke 7: 50; 8: 48.

momentary emotion; but "Go into peace" opens the door into a new world.

One can get an idea of what I am saying by reference to the verse that precedes my text. Let it be remembered that these are the closing words of Jesus to his disciples on the night of betrayal. And he said, "Behold the hour cometh, yea, is now come, when ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone"—that is tribulation, that is the storm; "and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me"[2]—that is the secret of his peace, that is the shelter. Then follow the words of the text, in which, in substance, he says, "What the Father is to me, that I am to you."

You will notice the imperial claim implied in these words. Who else could have spoken like this? "In me ye shall have peace!" Paul could say great things of himself, and could even urge people to imitate him. But he never said, "In me ye shall have peace, or rest, or joy." In that sphere Jesus reigns supreme. How is it Paul speaks? "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all forsook me"—that was the tribulation, that was the storm; "notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me and strengthened me"[3]—that was the shelter; proving what I have already said, that what the Father was to his well-beloved Son, that the Son is to his disciples. He dwelt in God; he said he

[2] John 16: 32.
[3] 2 Timothy 4: 16, 17.

did. And he says that his people dwell in him. And that is the eternal Chamber of Peace.

Peace depends not only on where one dwells, but also on what one believes. Jesus had just spoken of his ascension, to prepare a place for his people; of his presence with them during his absence; of his dwelling in them and their dwelling in him; of the gift of his spirit, and of his return. And he said that if we believe these things, and live in them; if we meditate on these things in the midst of our duties; if they are real to us, and not merely words written down in a book, then nothing can ever disturb us. Then cleave to the words of the Master, and let them pour into the soul. Then whatever storms may abound, the heart will be at rest.

Not every one attains to this peace. There are those who become bitter and defiant in the midst of tribulations; and especially in tribulation that comes from fidelity to duty. That is the matter with people in churches; and the matter with preachers who abandon their calling by reason of disappointment, opposition, inappreciation, and unfavorable criticism. How many have we known both in pulpit and pew, who have abandoned their efforts because of the hopeless misbehavior of those whom they serve! What is the trouble? They have simply resented tribulation; and when it was encountered they looked in the wrong place for peace. They ought to have had regard only for the approval of Jesus.

There is in the heart a native hunger for peace, and people will have it at any cost. But they sometimes make peace in wrong quarters, and pay too high a price. They make peace with the world by giving in; by ceasing resistance, by conforming to its life and standards. In that event, they have peace with the world, but no peace with Christ, nor with conscience. The world simply possesses them. They are in the world, but not in Christ. It is an infinitely sad and tragic thing, when a man gets peace and prosperity and joy at a price like that, because it is peace and joy that will come to an end in the great tribulation.

Jesus said, "I have overcome the world"; that is, he had fought his battle and won. The world had assailed him, and sought to win him by bribery and threat, but he had refused to alter his course or modify his standards, or to adopt the methods of the world, or to deviate by a hairbreadth from what he knew was the will of his Father. The world, therefore, despised and rejected him, mobbed and spat upon him, and put him to death. But there were two things it could not do—it could not break his will, nor turn him from his purpose. The result was that he won, and won in such a way that he became a Saviour. And the last words that he spoke were words of encouragement. The world killed him in hatred because it failed with him; and his death was his greatest victory. He overcame the world. And it ought now to be easier for us to overcome the world, and that for two reasons: The

world is already a beaten foe; and, besides, we are not alone, for Jesus is our ally. In him is victory assured.

Then remember these things: That tribulation is bound to occur; that it is not a bad thing in itself, or the sign of divine disfavor; that it ought not to surprise us, in ourselves, in our businesses, in our homes, or in our churches; and that it can be enveloped in peace on two conditions: That we abide in Christ, and hold ourselves to his word. Then let it come, and we can be of good courage, for the world is a beaten world; and the Christian can luxuriate in his tribulations and rollick in his trials!"

To every man there openeth
A way, and ways, and a way.
And the high Soul climbs the high way,
And the low Soul gropes on the low;
And in between, on the misty flats,
The rest drift to and fro.
But to every man there openeth
A high way and a low,
And every man decideth
The way his Soul shall go.

—*John Oxenham.*

III

THE HEART OF THE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

Christ in you.—Colossians 1: 27.

THE HEART OF THE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

JUST three short words, all monosyllables, and these, seemingly mystical, and yet they contain the heart of the Christian experience.

It is customary to say that in each of us is a threefold personality: That of thought and desire and will. But that is scarcely correct. It is better to say that in each of us there is one personality, and that this lives in a threefold world: In the world of thought, in the world of desire, and in the world of will. The fact is, there are three worlds, and in all of these we are living, and that, at one and the selfsame time. There is the world of the outer life, which we observe about us; there is the world of the inner life, of which we are always aware; but, back of this is the inmost life, of which we are never aware, and yet out of which come all our thoughts and emotions and, ultimately, the things that we do. The wise men call this the "subconscious" life, and the Bible calls it the "hidden man of the heart."[1] To use the figure of Solomon's Temple, it is the "Holy of Holies" of the human soul, of which the other worlds I have mentioned are but the outer court and the holy place.

Let me illustrate what I mean by this inmost world.

[1] 1 Peter 3: 4.

Here is one who is learning music. He first opens the book and reads the notes, and then, after he has learned the tune, he can play it without opening his book; but he still sees the page in memory, and he is actually playing from the book as if it were open before him. But by and by he becomes so familiar with that tune that he can rattle it off without seeing the book or remembering the page. He is simply expressing the emotion within him, and that, because the tune has settled down into his subconscious self. That is the reason song sometimes breaks forth from our lips, without our thinking, and that people sometimes sing like the birds, without opening a book or seeing a note or consciously calling the words to remembrance. That is the way people memorize Scripture. They first read the book, and when they think they have learned the passage before them, they close the book; but they see the passage they are trying to recite, just as plainly as if they were looking at the text as before. But, by and by, the great words of the Scripture settle down into the soul, or, as the wise men would say, into the "subconscious self"; and from there they come up at the slightest suggestion. I remember, years ago, when I was younger in the ministry than now, I was called to the bedside of a dear old saint who was about to descend into the Valley of the Shadow of Death. I do not know why she sent for me, unless it was because of my office, because she knew vastly more of the Lord and of his

Word than I did, either then or now. And as I stood by her side, I tried to repeat the Twenty-third Psalm, and I kept breaking down and forgetting it. But even while passing out of consciousness into that dim and shadowy region of unconsciousness, she took up the words and prompted me, and never failed for a moment; and the reason was that the Twenty-third Psalm was no longer written in her memory, but had settled down into her subconscious self, or, as we say, into her soul; and it broke into expression at the suggestion conveyed by my voice.

Now, we all have this hidden life—hidden from others, and just as much hidden from ourselves. We do not know what it is, and yet out of it spring all our recollections and all our imaginations and all our memories and all our reveries, and all our emotions and all our volitions. Everything that we think, or say, or do, comes from this secret place, as flowers and fruits from the secret life of the seed. And no man knows just what he is, because he does not know just what is hidden away in his subconscious life. It is this subconscious life that is really the secret of our living. It is this which makes the difference between people—between the scholarship that is culture, for instance, and the scholarship that is learning. The man whose scholarship consists only in things that he remembers, the things that he has read, and can tell you just where they are, by volume and page, is not really a scholar; he is simply an *index rerum.*

But the great scholar is he into whom scholarship has so wrought itself that it springs out from his life and out from his thought, and he knows not just where it came from. I knew a great judge, one time, and people said that he was one of the most eminent members of the Judiciary in the State where he lived. And the lawyers told me that he rarely cited an authority; that they did not think he knew where authorities were to be found; that the principles of law seemed to have been wrought into him, and that he decided the great questions that came before him according to those hidden principles, as if they were a part of his judicial nature; and that his decisions had never been reversed. Just so, I have in my library two kinds of books; some that have abundant foot-notes and copious indexes, and others which have neither foot-notes nor indexes, and scarcely even quotation marks. And I always feel more impressed by books of the latter kind, for they carry a sense of conviction, as if they were written by men who knew. That is the impression Jesus made as a teacher. Other teachers in his day were accustomed to substantiate their opinions by quoting from Rabbi this and Rabbi that; but Jesus taught with authority, and not as the scribes![2] What he said came so truly from within him that all were impressed; and he said, "The words which I speak unto you, are not mine, but his who sent me."[3] That is, God was within him. Paul says, "Christ in you,"

[2] Mark 1: 22. [3] John 14: 24.

and that, also, is what Jesus said, "I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." [4]

Now, it is in this region that a man becomes a Christian. It is not enough that Christ should control the outer court of the life; that is, our conduct and judgments and intercourse with the world, nor even our habits of worship. These are things that a man can put on as he puts on his clothes for dress-up occasions. And it is interesting to note that the ways that we have and the clothes that we wear are both of them called by the very same name. They are called "habits"; as a woman, for instance, wears a riding-habit, because she has the habit of riding. So our Lord's control of the outer world does not make one a Christian; by which is meant that one is not necessarily a Christian because he has Christian habits. His habits may be as external to him as his clothes. And it is not enough that our Lord should control in the second chamber of the life; that is, that we should think of him with reverence and dwell upon him with admiration, or find the mind aglow with tender feeling when we think of his moral loveliness. That, in itself, does not make one a Christian. In order to make one a Christian, our Lord must pass through these two outer courts, and enter into the sanctuary of the soul, which, as we have said, the wise men speak of as the "subconscious life." That is what the Scripture means when it speaks of "being renewed in the

[4] John 14: 20.

spirit of the mind";[5] of being "quickened together with Christ";[6] of being "created in Jesus unto good works";[7] or of being "born again." That is what Jesus meant when he said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot either enter or see the Kingdom of God."[8]

Nothing in the world so differentiates men as being born again. And this new birth takes place, not in the outer world of thought and action; nor in the inner world of self-communing; it takes place in the very core of the being; and it is made by a decision which seems to open the soul, so that Christ may pass into that secret place; and, henceforth, the man is a new creation. It was so in the case of Paul. At one time, he was the open foe of Jesus. All three worlds of his gigantic being were in open hostility against him. His outer life was an unrelenting campaign against Jesus and his people. His mind was closed against the gospel, and his inner spirit was dark with hatred, and he went about breathing out threatenings and slaughter. The inmost core of his being was a fortress armed against Jesus, but it ultimately failed, and we can mark the steps by which it was captured. Paul's large soul and penetrating mind began to apprehend something of the wisdom of Jesus. Into his imagination there came an appreciation of the grace and love-

[5] Ephesians 4: 23.
[6] Ephesians 2: 5.
[7] Ephesians 2: 10.
[8] John 3: 3.

liness of Jesus. He began to wish that these things might be true; and, at times, like the rest of us, he had moments of strange discontent with himself and with what he was doing. But he was not yet a Christian. Then came that moment on the Damascus Road, when it seemed to him a great light shined about him; as though the voice of Jesus rang through the corridors of his soul, and he relaxed his opposition and flung open the door of his soul; and, standing there as it were, he said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"[9] And in that instant Christ entered into him. He was born within him, and continued within him, and was ultimately perfected in him. And it all came about by the opening of the soul to Jesus.

And this isn't a solitary illustration. Let me give you another: It was on a Sunday night in October, when a drunken man staggered through the streets of Worcester, Massachusetts. He had been brought to the very depths of degradation. He had passed through the inner temple of sorrow; he was completely down, and almost out, and he stood by the railway tracks with the thought in his mind that he would fling himself beneath the wheels of a train that was almost due. He also fingered in his pocket a vial of poison. Just then, an unknown man tapped him on the shoulder and said in tones not of disgust, but affection, "You have been drinking today!" and then he added, "Why don't you sign the pledge?" The question was

[9] Acts 9:6 (A. V.).

commonplace enough, and almost puerile, at least it might seem so to us; and yet, strangely, it stirred the inmost soul of this wretched man, and though he stammered something to the effect that he was beyond the help or the hope of a temperance pledge, yet the stranger's tenderness laid hold upon his soul; and John B. Gough from that moment became an enthusiast, an apostle, and a prophet. And a million men and women were enrolled by him in opposition to the use of strong drink, and ten times that number will rise up today to call him blessed. Now, how did this come about? It was simply that Joel Stratton got his message into the deepest place of Gough's wretched soul; and there it stayed, and became, like all things in the inmost soul, the controlling thing in his life.

It was so in the case of Augustine, whose name will always be foremost among those whom we speak of as the Church "Fathers." This man had burned the candle at both ends. He had lived on two different planes at the same time. He was a giant in intellect, and yet he was a rake in conduct. He was consumed by a feverish frenzy of thought and, at the same time, scorched by unholy passion and lust. His mother's piety and his father's vices fought for the mastery of his blood. He tried again and again to renounce his worldly and wicked life and to escape from his thralldom; but he could not. And for years he lived a divided soul. One day in his anguish, he flung himself down beneath a fig-tree in his garden, when suddenly

he seemed to hear the voice of a boy or of a girl, singing in a neighboring house; and the refrain said: "Take it and read. Take it and read." And, checking his emotion, he hurried to the place where he kept his Bible, and, opening it at random, he read the first verse on which his eyes fell: "Not in drunkenness and revelry, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision in the flesh to fulfil the lust thereof." [10] And he said, "No further word I read, nor was there need, for instantly, at the end of the sentence, as though my heart were filled with a light of peace, all the shadows of doubt melted away." Now, what had happened? The Lord Jesus had in some way gotten into the deep place of Augustine's soul. The door was opened, and henceforth it was Christ in him.

When Mr. Moody was preaching in a great series of meetings on the outskirts of Boston, there was a young man who heard him, night after night. He felt that he ought to be a Christian, and he came to the place where, again and again, he went into the inquiry-room; but each time he would simply say, "Tomorrow night I will settle it," and, leaving the building, he would walk to his home in the distance. One night he was walking beneath the trees, when suddenly he stopped. The moonlight made things perfectly plain, and, taking his walking-stick, he drew a

[10] Romans 13: 13, 14.

line across his pathway; and, stepping back and looking upon it, he said: "Now, if I step over that line, it means that I open my heart to Jesus. But if I go around it, at either end, it means that I keep the door of my heart closed." He looked at the line but a moment, and then he deliberately passed over it. And it is a bit of history that this man who, that night, let down the bars of his soul and by an act of decision stepped over that line, became one of the most eminent Christians and one of the most faithful workers in the cause of Jesus in all that New England region.

"Christ in you." That is the beginning, the middle, and the end of the Christian experience; and Christ is not only admitted to the soul by such a definite act, and he becomes born within, but he "abides in the soul"—that is what he says, or that he is "formed within us," [11] as the apostle says.

It is the hidden life that chisels the face and gives to each one his personal appearance. Our looks simply reflect our emotions. They are what the soul looks like at the time. You have seen people with whom you would not like to travel alone in a car, and yet, outwardly, you know nothing against them; nothing except what is written in their faces. And, on the other hand, there are faces that carry in them lines of real benediction and blessing and peace. These people do not know it, and you cannot say that they are either handsome or pretty; they are simply beautiful, and

[11] Galatians 4: 19.

that is vastly better, for they reflect a beautiful soul. That is what Emerson said of Longfellow. You recall that Emerson's body outlasted his mind, and in his later years, the brilliant sage of Concord was more like a little child. He could walk about, but he did not know his oldtime friends, and did not think as before. And when Longfellow died, Mr. Emerson's friends thought he should be taken to see his old companion in letters; so they brought him into the room and he stood by the casket, but he did not recognize who was there. He simply looked at the good poet, and then said, "He must have had a beautiful soul." And a beautiful soul is the highest type of Christian experience, and that can only be given by the indwelling of Jesus. It is Christ in you. And the longer he is in one, the more beautiful the soul, and, therefore, the more beautiful the face. A young Christian's life never manifests the spiritual grace of the aged saint. The painter tells us that a child's face, so soft and rosy and dimpled, is scarcely worth the skill of the artist's hand; but the old and worn and deeply-lined face which tells of a soul that has passed through temptation, and has prayed in the time of strain, and shed tears in the night of penitence, and sung songs in the days of victorious faith, now scarred and seamy and yet radiant with the beauty of holiness—that is what the painter loves to portray. It is the old believer who wears the highest spiritual beauty; because grace for grace, and grace after grace, and grace upon grace,

and grace in grace, have been poured into a beautiful life. Not only that Christ has been *born* into the soul —that is conversion; but that Christ has been *formed* in the soul—that is sanctification.

It may be that some one will say I am dealing with the mystical in religion when I speak of Christ being formed in the soul, in the inmost core of the being, in what the wise men call the "subconscious life"; as if one personality could possess another. True, it is mystical, but so is the fourteenth chapter of John; and as such, it must be preached, because it is found in the Scripture. Moreover, it is quite within the range of ordinary experience.

No doubt you have all read Browning's *By the Fireside,* in which he pictures a simple scene—a husband and a wife sitting by the hearthstone in the evening hour. They have lived in close and unsullied fellowship. They are both growing old, and the husband tells the wife how deeply and potently her character and her personality have penetrated his own:

> My own, see where the years conduct!
> At first, 'twas something our two souls
> Should mix as mists do; each is sucked
> In each now; on, the new stream rolls,
> Whatever rocks obstruct.

Christ in you. Now let me conclude this passage. "It is Christ in you, the hope of glory"—that is what Paul says; but John puts it in this way: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God"; that is, because

Christ is in us; "and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is"[12] —that is the hope of glory. I have said that we live at one and the same time in three worlds. But the day is coming when the outer world shall pass away; when the body in which we dwell shall also crumble to dust. Then, is there anything that shall be left? The inmost world of our deepest personality where Christ has been formed within us, that shall remain, and it shall take to itself a new body, even as it shall please the Lord; and that shall be just like his, for we shall see him as he is.

And now I begin to close. And all I have said brings us face to face with a solemn issue, with an alternative that cannot be escaped. Either Christ has been formed within us and is pressing on to perfect fashioning, or some other personality is becoming the indwelling and dominant spirit in our inmost heart. There is a sentence in the Gospel which cannot be read without causing one to stop and reflect. It reads like this: "And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after the sop, Satan entered into him."[13] That is, up to that moment, Judas had held the shrine of his soul against the Evil One. He had dickered with Satan, it is true, but had not actually admitted him to his soul. He had

[12] 1 John 3: 2.
[13] John 13: 26, 27.

had his times of conviction, and had known the power of Christ to arouse the nobler passions of his soul, and he had at times almost repented and fallen at the feet of Jesus and confessed it all. But now the end had come; and as Jesus gave him the sop, which was an appeal that might have ended in complete surrender, in that moment Judas opened the door of his soul and passed from the gate of Heaven to the gate of hell! And that is a tragedy that is reenacted every day in this world.

Both nature and grace abhor a vacuum. The soul of man cannot remain empty; and to enthrone self, solitary and alone, in the soul, is the same as to open a door unto Satan. There is only salvation in admitting Jesus. Then, will you do it? It is for this that God has revealed himself in the Scripture; for this that Jesus came among men; for this that the gospel is preached; and for this that I have spoken this message. It is not enough to live an upright life in this world, for no uprightness is as erect as the Lord requires; not enough to think well of Jesus and to admire his loveliness, for one can do this while still looking out of the windows of his soul, with the door still barred. The door of the soul must be opened, and that from the inside, and that by our own hands; by which I mean, by our own decision. But that decision opens the door, and in comes Christ, and henceforth it is "Christ in you." That is the beginning and the middle and the end of the Christian life, and it fits two worlds:

That which now is, and that which is to come. How it changes the life is illustrated in this way:

I had walked life's way, with an easy tread;
  I had followed where comfort and pleasure led,
Until one day, in a quiet place,
  I met my Master face to face.

With station and rank and wealth for my goal,
  Much thought for my body, but none for my soul,
I had entered to win in life's mad race
  'Till I met my Master face to face.

I had builded my castles and reared them high,
  With turrets that pierced the blue of the sky;
I had sworn to rule with an iron mace,
  'Till I met my Master face to face.

I met him and knew him, and blushed to see
  That his eyes, full of pity, were fixed upon me;
And I faltered and fell at his feet that day,
  And my castles all melted and vanished away.

Melted and vanished, and now in their place
  Naught else could I see but the Master's face.
And I cried aloud, "Oh, make me meet
  To follow the path of thy blood-stained feet."

My thoughts are now for the souls of men;
  I have lost my life, to find it again,
E'er since, one day, in a quiet place,
  I met my Master face to face.

IV

THE PRIMACY OF THE ATONEMENT

I delivered unto you, first of all, . . . how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures.

—*1 Corinthians 15: 3.*

THE PRIMACY OF THE ATONEMENT

A CHRISTIAN preacher is not a philosopher; at least, he ought not to philosophize in his preaching. He is simply a teacher whose message is prescribed; and that message is found in the Bible. He may go outside the Bible for illustrations, but these only that he may make clear the things that are found in the Bible. The Bible is the text-book of the preacher; and in it are some things that are very fundamental; for instance, sin, the person of Christ, and salvation. And the teacher who slights these subjects may be a philosopher. But of one thing we are certain: he is not a Christian preacher.

The apostle Paul was a typical preacher. And the apostle says, "I delivered unto you first of all—how that Christ died for our sins." The essential Christian message is found in these words. "First of all!" An artisan once asked his little boy how he would commence to build a house, and the boy replied that he would first put in the windows. And that is the way some people do in their preaching. They overlook the fundamentals; they slight the important things; they omit the foundations; they forget the central word. They fail to set the cross in the midst of the gospel, and they slur over this text, "How that Christ died for our sins."

But what does it mean—to die? Here is where we have made our first mistake. We have confused this experience with the dissolution of the body; whereas, death is an experience of the soul. And that which we speak of as "death" our Lord insisted was simply a sleep. You remember how he came to the house of the ruler. There lay the child all pallid and chill; and the mourners stood about in their trappings of woe, but Jesus spake with assurance: "She is not dead, but sleepeth."[1] And the people laughed him to scorn; but he touched her hand and waked her up as simply as you would waken a child in the morning, for she was not really dead. You remember the story of Lazarus and what Jesus said when he heard that the home in Bethany was shrouded in sorrow. He said, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth."[2] And his disciples said, "Why, if he sleep, he shall do well." They misunderstood him entirely, and it was only in order to clear up their confusion that he adopted their word and said, "Lazarus is dead." But the point is this: That what we speak of as death, our Lord spoke of as "sleep." And the word "death" he kept in reserve for some other experience; and it is this latter experience the Scripture has in mind when it says that "Christ died for our sins."

What, then, do we mean by the Saviour's death? Well, we mean something more than the cross; we

[1] Luke 8: 52.
[2] John 11: 11.

mean something more than a crucified body and quivering flesh and dripping blood. We mean something more than the cessation of life. That is what Jesus spoke of as a "sleep." Since the crucifixion of Jesus there have been hosts of his disciples who have been similarly crucified and have shared a bloody martyrdom like their Master's. They have slept. That is what is said of Stephen, the first Christian martyr. He "fell on sleep." [3] Unlike their Master, however, they have none of them died. But the Scripture says that "Christ died." There is a mystery here which enwraps the entire gospel.

What, then, do we mean by the death of Christ? It is an experience of the soul; and in order to understand it, we must go back along the sorrowful way, back to Gethsemane, back to the gate of the garden. Let me quote what is written: "And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." [4] Here he is talking of the real thing; not of sleep; not of the dissolution of the body; not of the separation of the soul from the flesh, but of an experience within the soul. Notice the words, "He began to be sore amazed, very heavy and exceeding sorrowful." These are astounding words. This "sore amazed" is an experience of coming into a place

[3] Acts 7: 60.
[4] Mark 14: 33.

where all perspectives are altered; where there is nothing at all familiar; where the soul is thrown into a panic of great fear. It suggests an awful sense of homelessness. He who had but an hour before spoken so confidently of his Father's house with its many mansions; who so joyfully proclaimed the unfailing presence of the Father with him; who had said, "I am not alone, for the Father is with me," [5] had now come into an experience where all known perspectives had altered; where there was nothing familiar; where the soul stood aghast. That was what was overwhelming the Saviour.

But that was not all. He began to be "very heavy"; and that means to be so utterly crushed with depression as to sink into despair. It is the figure of wax that is melting before a furnace. It simply droops down into a shapeless mass. That was the experience into which he had come.

Nor is that all. For the words, "exceeding sorrowful," mean "to be caught up in a very cyclone of grief." These are the three expressions which the Spirit of God has selected to give to us some conception of the emotions which swept over the soul of Jesus in the garden; the panic of a great fear, the crushing of an awful depression, and the cyclone of an unutterable grief.

Nor is this all. The Scripture represents that though in the garden, after his prayer, he was heard and an

[5] John 8: 16.

angel came and strengthened him, yet on the cross he had a concluding experience—not when the nails were driven into his hands and feet, but when, after hours of silence, he cried aloud, "My God, my God, why didst thou forsake me?"[6] as though his spirit were coming up from an awful banishment, where it seemed to him he had been separated from God.

That is death—an appalling midnight of the soul—a horror of great darkness, exceeding desolation, banishment. The Father's house was obscured. The Father's hand had vanished. The Son of God was in utter darkness and in the agonies of a consuming loneliness. That was death; a thing which you and I need never experience. What we call death our Lord called sleep. But the heart of the gospel is this, That Christ died.

Now that loneliness of soul—that utter banishment—is the wages of sin; for the wages of sin is death. But Jesus knew no sin. There was in him not a single taint of personal evil; and therefore the Scripture says, "He died for our sins." A few soldiers with hammers and nails put him to sleep on the cross. But the gospel is that he died for our sins; that he voluntarily went into outer darkness, into the awful eclipse of forsakenness and abandonment; that he tasted death for every man; that he drank the cup for the race.

He died for all. This is the gospel which the apostle brought to the city of Corinth. He did not come with

[6] Matthew 27: 46.

the ethics of Jesus, for the ethics of Jesus is not the first word of the gospel. He did not begin with the Sermon on the Mount, nor would I begin with that sermon. I believe in that sermon. I believe it outlines the requirements of conduct for Christian people; but it is not the first word to speak to the natural man, because Jesus is something more than a teacher. Nor did the apostle come to that city with the example of Jesus, first of all. I know example is more potent than precept; but the example of Jesus does not make him a Saviour. I cannot say to the natural man: "Here is your pattern; be like him, and you shall live." I might as well tell him to stand upon yonder mountain and leap two thousand feet into the air, or bid him start at the foot of the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor and swim the Atlantic Ocean in order to be saved. It is no use to bring to men a model of conduct for them to copy. The gospel is just a costly something for men to receive in all their poverty, helplessness, and guilt.

First of all! It is nothing for man to do or not to do, to be or not to be, to practise or to omit. The gospel is not good advice, but good news. It is glad tidings of great joy for those who have neither money, might, nor merit. Nor does this foremost word concern some divine operation the Saviour will perform within his people; creating within them hearts that are clean, and making them new creatures. The foremost word is something simpler than that. It is not

something to be done within them, but something which has been done outside of them—outside their city, outside their country, outside their generation. It is, that Christ died for our sins. It is not something that the Saviour will do in the future; it is something he has done, and will never do again. It is a finished work. It is done once and forever.

I do not understand all this, but I know what the Bible says: "That he was made sin for us."[7] Sin is a generic term. It covers every specific sin. When it is written that he was made sin for us, it means that he was made a malefactor for the malefactors, a robber for the robbers, a curse for all, to redeem us from the curse. He was arrested at midnight like a felon; bound, and buffeted and flogged, and spat upon, crowned with thorns, hooted at on the streets, and executed as an enemy of the race. Well, he was made that for me. That is the central word of the gospel.

And nothing can be paid for this salvation. It is glad tidings for those who have nothing to pay. A very precious piece of property which shines in the celestial light of my early recollection was a crossbow which was made by my father. It was a source of unbounded delight. I could hold it with the art of an Indian; and, placing an apple on the top of a post, I could play I was shooting like William Tell. Well, I had a cousin come to visit me, and he fell in love with my crossbow and arrow, and wanted to buy them.

[7] 2 Corinthians 5: 21.

My father told me that I could give them to that cousin, and he would make me others, but if I were common enough to sell them, he would not furnish any more. But my visitor would not take them as a gift; he wanted to buy them. And so we sat down to settle the question. He was generous and tried to keep the price up; while I wanted to do as I was told and give them away and, possibly, become possessed of a better. We got the price down from one-half dollar to five cents. I bantered him down to four cents, three cents, two cents, one cent. It was the day when in Canada we used to have half-cents. Flushed with my success, I told him to come down to a quarter of a cent! He saw the point and said there were no quarter-cents. Whereupon the bargain was closed, and he gave me a half-cent for my bow and arrow. This was so near to nothing that I reported the transaction to my father, with expectation of his approval; but, to my dismay, he disapproved. He said giving was giving, and selling was selling. He held that the crossbow had not been given, but was sold, and he would not make me a new one. And no new crossbow did I ever possess after that.

Do you see the point? Salvation is free. It is the costliest thing in the universe; but it is offered only as a gift. It can be had only by those who will take it as such. If your pride says you must pay even a quarter of a cent for it, then it cannot be had. God would as soon abdicate his throne as to stoop from

heaven to sell to the proud salvation. "Blessed are the poor." The gospel is for the poor. It is for those who have neither money, might, nor merit. The spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he hath anointed me to preach good tidings for and to the poor, and that because salvation is of God. Isn't that a wonderful gospel?

I said that Jesus died; that his death was a spiritual experience. Let me proceed a little further—for he came to save us from death. Did he not say, "If a man keep my word, he shall never see death"?[8] Not that he shall not fall on sleep; not that he shall not be borne in the tasseled hearse to the silent city; but, if he believe in Jesus, he shall not see death. Did he not say, "There is a bread that cometh down from heaven, which if one shall eat thereof, he shall not die"?[9] Not that he shall not sleep; not that: but he shall not die, for death is a spiritual experience. Did he not say, "He that heareth my words, and believeth on him that sent me, is passed from death unto life"?[10] Is passed! The great transaction is effected. He is alive forevermore.

I do not expect to die. I am one of those who shall not taste of death 'till I see the Son of man come in his glory. I shall sleep. But do not worry. Some years ago, there lived in London a very famous preacher named Joseph Parker. One day he was

[8] John 8: 51.
[9] John 6: 50.
[10] John 5: 24.

preaching in this way and said: "Some day the people will pass this church and will say, 'Poor old Joseph Parker! He is dead.' But don't you believe it. He will be more alive then than now."

How is it with you? The Scripture affirms that apart from Christ we are still under the dominion of sin—sin and abandonment, sin and homelessness, sin and the terrible night. It is a law, fixed and unchanging—the law of sin and death. But the Scripture also affirms that in Christ Jesus we come under the dominion of another law, which is the law of the spirit of life; and by this we are freed from the law of sin and death.[11] That is the gospel, and it leads to the place, to the experience, where there shall be no more death. Here is the gospel: That I, a poor, struggling wrongdoer, may become so identified with Christ, that Christ and I are one man. That is no fancy; that is the language of the Scripture. "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit," [12] and where he is, there shall I be, also.

So I conclude where I began: "I deliver unto you, first of all, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scripture."

[11] Romans 8: 2.
[12] 1 Corinthians 6: 17.

V

THE MARKS OF JESUS

From henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus.

—Galatians 6: 17.

THE MARKS OF JESUS

In the land where my boyhood days were passed, each stock-raiser had a legal mark which was registered with the county clerk. The mark with which I was most familiar was a brutal brand—a notch gouged from the top of the right ear and another from the bottom of the left ear of every creature on the place. Many are the cattle and the sheep these hands have helped to brand! A similar custom is practised on the Western horse-farms; and every day in the city one will meet with horses that bear the brand of an earlier ownership.

It is a custom like this to which the apostle refers. In those days the slaves outnumbered the freemen, and the wealth of the rich consisted largely of the slaves they owned. And each owner had his mark, which was the sign of his possession. It was a kind of trade-mark. The peasant stamped his initials in the bricks he made; the molder blew his mark in the glass he made; the emperor's image was upon the current coin; the herdsman slit the ears of his cattle, and the owner put his brand upon his slaves. He branded them upon the shoulder, or upon the palms of the hands, and sometimes upon the brow. And Paul regarded himself as the slave of Jesus. This, he said, could easily be seen by his scars and wounds and infirmities.

Had he not languished in prison? Had he not been beaten with rods again and again? Had he not been stoned, and left for dead outside the city? All these things had left their marks upon him. And these scars he now bared to show whose slave he was.

All through this epistle, the apostle is fulminating against his accusers, who had followed him throughout the land and taught that he was no apostle. He had well-nigh lost his patience. And now he showed his hands, and bared his arms, and tore open his clothes, and pointed to his wounds. "Look," he said, "these were received at Philippi; these at Lystra; these at Iconium; these when I was buffeted for a day and a night in the deep. These are the marks of a slave." And the marks on the body of a slave forbade any other man the right to touch him, or to compel him to work. The mark was at once the sign of servitude to his own master and the sign of freedom from all others. So Paul flung his enemies aside. "Stand back!" he said, "let no man trouble me! I bear branded in my body the mark of my Master. I am the bond-slave of Jesus."

It will be necessary to get clearly in mind the idea of the apostle. Our English Bibles are not always exact, and they have partially concealed the idea in these words. In the Bible there are the ideas both of the servant and the slave. The former was not unlike the servant of today. He contracted for his labor; he was hired; and there was no constraint upon him

outside the bond of contract. The slave was quite another person. He was a chattel. His master could do with him precisely as he chose. He could set him to any task; he could do what he liked with any little possessions the slave might seem to have; he could break up his family relations and separate him from his wife and kin; he could sell him to another, and if in a fit of passion he smote his slave to death, there was no one who might protest. Paul did not say he was the servant of Jesus, but that he was his slave. And though his Lord was the gentlest of masters, yet the apostle could think of no other word that would measure the thought he had in mind but this: That he was the bond-slave of the living Lord.

Now, slavery is not right as between man and man; but it is a blessed truth when thought of in respect of Christ. He has absolute authority upon the Christian person. And the one thing that we must render is unquestioning and unreserved obedience. That which is abject degradation when it is required of any man by his fellow, is felt to be blessed and joyful and strong when required of us by Jesus. We are his slaves, if we sustain to him any relation at all. He is absolute sovereign within the soul. Where he wills, he sends us. What he wants, he requires of us. Where, then, is the place for self-will or self-indulgence or murmuring, or reluctance, or the assertion of personal right in the service of Christ? We are but slaves; and to him we owe but one thing—unquestioning service.

But what is the basis of this slavery? In other days, men acquired slaves by conquest or by purchase. And the Master has acquired his right—at least, upon the ground of purchase. He hath bought up the world, not with silver and gold, but with the wondrous wealth of his love.[1] The only thing that gives one human being the right to control another is the fact that he who claims control has given himself for the good of the soul he would control. What constitutes the right of the parents to control the children in the home? Not simply that the parents were first in the home; not simply that they are stronger; not simply that they feed and clothe the little ones. The only ground for their claim is this: That they love the little ones, and are doing for them their very best. Upon what ground does the husband claim to be the head of the house? Not because he is a man, both strong and wise; not because in all likelihood the home is held in his name; not that, but because he has given out for the home the best that he has of time and toil and love. "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it."[2] The right of Christ to the obedience of men is not the right of creator, but that of redeemer. And the thing at the heart of all Christian service is the triumphant fact of love.

The epistle to the Galatians is a trumpet-call to liberty. "I have called you unto liberty," says the

[1] 1 Peter 1: 18. [2] Ephesians 5: 25.

apostle. "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free."[3] But the liberty of the Christian is slavery; and the slavery of the Christian is freedom. Who, then, is the freeman, but he whose will corresponds to the outward law? The statute-books are filled with laws; but they are no burden to the well-doer, for he has no wish to break the laws of the land. He, then, is the freeman who delights to do what it is right to do. The train is free to run upon the track; the ship is free to spread its sails and catch the winds of heaven; the bird is free to balance upon its wings and hang for hours in the sky; the planets are free to swing along their paths; and the Christian is free to perform all the things that belong to the Christian life. "If the Son shall make one free, he shall be free indeed."[4] He bears in his body the charter of his liberty, which is the brand of Jesus. We are sometimes asked what the Christian can do. He can do everything that is right. And that is all that any one can do without the rebuke of his heart. Young people ask me what they can do, if they yield themselves to Christ; and I answer that they can do just what they will want to do. But the beautiful thing is this: That they will want to do the thing that is right. It is the law of the new nature. What else is the new birth than this; that the nature is made to fit the duty?

But look more closely at these marks. The apostle

[3] Galatians 5: 1. [4] John 8: 36.

meant his stripes and wounds and, possibly, the diseases he may have contracted in his zealous work. He knew these things were the direct results of his faithful ministry. He did not think these things had "happened" to him, nor that they had come by a blundering fate. He considered that these marks and wounds and infirmities had sprung from his Master's hand, as he held the iron against the hissing flesh. Suppose he had been a pastor today, and in the round of self-forgetful visitation, he had contracted a disease from whose effects he could never fully recover. He would say: "This is no 'happen-so.' It is providential." If in the round of duty he had been maimed, as we should say, "by accident," he would have looked at his empty sleeve, and said, "The mark of Jesus!" If he had been separated from his family, or they had been taken from him by painful illness, he would not have repined. He would have said, "All this is involved in the relation I bear to Christ"; and he would have hurried along with work he had to do.

Now, is there anything in this for us? I think there is. Every Christian person ought to bear in his body the evident token that he belongs to Christ. We ought to be so changed that we should look like Christian people. We ought not to possess some things that others plainly possess. There are things to be suppressed and coerced, if one means to be a slave of Christ. The Christian man is naturally just as spirited as other men. If you tickle him, he will laugh; if you

wound him, he will bleed; if you trample upon him, he will suffer. The same red blood is in his veins. But he cannot resent these things, as others do. The spirit of the gospel has kept me a thousand times from answering the fool in his folly. And so it must be with all. When reviled, we cannot revile. We are forbidden to render evil for evil. And the restraints of conduct should be so plain that they would be known as the marks of Jesus. I know people who are small and childish and full of whims. They greatly try my patience, and the natural man would give them up at once. He would refuse to be bothered with them. But we cannot give them up, nor can the Christian church. We must bear with them and love them, and never be weary in well-doing; in this way to show in face and manner the evident marks of Christ.

There ought to be in every Christian person the outward marks of Christ. We sometimes excuse offensive ways, and say, "Yes, but then, he really has a Christian heart." But the good in the heart must show in the life. It ought to show in the speech, in words that are "seasoned with salt." Frivolous talk and dreary gossip, idle talk and wicked words will never be heard from Christian lips. And Christian people will be so changed that without even a word, all friends will know that they have been in the school of Christ.

I said that the brand of the slave was sometimes stamped in the palm of the hand. That is a con-

spicuous place. No member one has is so much in evidence as his hand. Everything he does is with that member. With the hand he toils, expresses his friendship, pays his bills, and counts his money. The spirit of man is subtle and secret, and sometimes it tries to dissemble. But the body cannot deceive, and the mark of Christ is in the body. The witness of Jesus is not only in the soul, but also in the place where all may see. Not every one reads the Bible and learns at first hand the will of God and his works; but every one reads the Christian person; and we are living epistles, read and known of all.

I said that the old-time slavery permitted the master to claim as his own the little possessions the slave might seem to have. Here is his cottage, and round about it the slave has tilled the soil, and made a little garden, and grown some luscious things. All this was done in after-hours, and with no neglect of his master's work. Surely these things he might claim for his own. But one day the master comes along and says, "Now we shall gather in this little crop." "But," the slave protests: "I thought these things were mine. I have nurtured them, and all by work in 'overtime.'" And the master would say, "There is no overtime, and these things also are mine."

The lesson is this: That in the Christian life there is no "overtime," for all the days are his; there are no private possessions, for all things belong to him. People are sometimes perplexed as to how much of their

wealth they shall devote to Christian work. One-tenth? That is not the Christian computation, because all one has belongs, with himself, to his Master; his business, its earnings, his time, and his "private bank account," they all belong to Christ. He gives one-tenth as the work of his servitude; he administers the balance as a servant, trustee, or trusted administrator.

I notice that Paul gloried in these marks. He bore them with a splendid pride, as the veteran bears the wounds of many a battle. The veteran holds up his empty sleeve, and tells the time and place where the arm was lost. So the apostle exults in his bonds, and gives thanks for him who always leads him about in service. It is degradation to bear the marks of slavery unless the master is Christ. But in his case, the bonds are glorified, and the allegiance is both joy and rejoicing.

I closed my eyes and saw a vision. There stood a throne, and on it one like unto the Son of man. Before him were gathered all the peoples of the earth, of every nation and kindred and tribe. And the people began to divide. There were some who turned off to the left, and as they receded into the murky night, the air was filled with weeping; the others turned to the right, and as they passed I heard their rejoicing, and I saw them look at their hands; and the One on the throne said: "Blest are ye: I was an hungered, and athirst, and naked, and sick, and in prison, and ye

ministered unto me. Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least, ye have done it unto me;" "and whosoever hath given even so much as a cup of cold water in my name shall in no wise lose his reward." [5] And I saw that they were saved, not by the marks of Jesus, for the mystery of salvation I could not understand; but I saw that all of them were bond-slaves of Jesus, that they bore his marks in their bodies, and I am told that they shall serve him forever and ever.

[5] Matthew 25: 31ff.; 10: 42.

VI

POWERFUL PROMISES

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

—2 Peter 1: 4.

POWERFUL PROMISES

At any rate, the Bible is frank. It says the plainest things about man's sin; but it also holds before him a wonderful hope. Today he is mired in corruption; tomorrow he may have escaped from this and become like God. The whole gospel is found in these few words.

We have here a statement of the fact of sin, and its origin. The fact is "corruption"; and the origin is "through lust." I know that there are worldly-wise men who sneer at the third chapter of Genesis. But this I have noticed: That they are uniformly unable to give us a simpler solution of the origin and mystery of evil. Somewhere, and at some time, the race must have sinned. The stream of life has been poisoned; and this must have taken place at its fountainhead, for we cannot find any divisions of that stream which have not the entire characteristics of the whole. The Bible says the event took place in the first man, before a single son was born; that he lusted after something which was forbidden to him, and that by his disobedience he fell from his primal innocence, degraded the race, and entailed a condition of corruption; that we also have aggravated this calamity by repeating sin, and deepening the ruin.

I am not so much concerned about the origin of

this condition. We can leave that with a single word. But there are certain facts which cannot be brushed aside. A man may question the story as it is written in Scripture; but he cannot deny it, for it does not come within the region of denial. Neither can he deny the story as it is reproduced in actual life today. Have you never plucked forbidden fruit? Have you never lusted for pleasures which have been distinctly forbidden? And as a consequence of transgression, have you never experienced a repulsive sickness, and an intolerable loathing, so that you also have known the meaning of this phrase, "the corruption which is in the world through lust"? Do you not know anything of the lashings of remorse?

Let me ask you another question: How does it happen that the heart is so constantly "running down"? Why must it be repeatedly wound up, and fastened with ratchets? Why do we have to make, and repeat, and renew resolves, and lash the will to "the sticking-place"? Why is it that a man never backslides into holiness? Why cannot we take off the brakes and find ourselves just gliding into the highest moral living? Everything, we are told, tends to move in the line of least resistance. Do we find that we are drifting toward charity and holiness and benevolence and virtue? Nay, but to all of us, these graces are the fruit of serious toil. They are magnificent possessions, more precious than gold and sparkling gems; but they are gotten by struggle and privation and self-denial.

And that word "self-denial" contains a fossil history of primal sin. It tells us of an evil self, that must be constantly denied, because its desires are wrong. But whence this evil self, and whence these wrong desires? And why so hard to control?

Let us come a little closer to this subject. Let me hint at the things that we cannot spread before the public—our secret thoughts and the faults which are hidden—the thoughts that creep into the heart and nestle there. Can you tell me whence they come? Tell me, for instance, whence come envy, and jealousy, and malice, and evil desire; and the lust for gold that makes the thief, and the thirst for blood which crimsons the hand of murder? Do you not think that these things arise in human life, as malaria and pestilence from a death-dealing bog? Do they not bespeak what this Scripture calls a "corruption which is in the world through lust"? Who would not shrink from having his thoughts proclaimed with the trumpet of Gabriel? I know that Jesus has opened his heart, and challenged the world. "Which of you convinceth me of sin?"[1] said he. But we cannot do that. We hide our thoughts, and cover our faults with a crimson blush, and walk among our nearest friends with a coward's step. What, then, has befallen man? If God made him innocent—and no one questions this—then something must have happened to corrupt his thoughts, and make them so black that he stands in

[1] John 8: 46.

dread of that day for which all other days were made, when his hidden history shall be revealed.

There is something pathetic in man's attempt to assert his worth. He speaks, for instance, of the "majesty of conscience," and the "dignity of human nature," and of the "Fatherhood of God," and the "brotherhood of man," as if these terms were true and meaningful today. Take the first of these and see what comfort there is in it. The "majesty of conscience!" Do you know that conscience almost always speaks in judgment? It seems to have lost its authority to command, if it ever possessed that authority. It cannot insist upon obedience, but can only raise its voice in remonstrance. It can be easily overruled and voted down; and then it can only record a minority vote, and lapse into silence.

I wish I could stop to speak of these other shibboleths. They are talked in political canvass, and cheered in meetings of anarchists. I have heard them used in Christian pulpits. "The dignity of man!" That phrase only becomes glorious in the light of a far-off day. "The Fatherhood of God!" and "the brotherhood of man!" These do not represent an actual possession, but they tell of a wonderful possibility. We must not mistake. As used in many instances they seem like a determination on the part of man to brave it out with God. I wish I could go into the street, and tell every man that he is by nature a child of God. I wish I could preach the natural sonship of man. But

before I start I hear the Master's solemn word, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." [2] There is a great truth to publish to men. It tells of the Fatherhood of God; but this is found only in Jesus Christ. If any man be in him, he is a new creature. He has "escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust," and has become a partaker of the divine nature. There, and there only, is the ground for the Fatherhood of God. And when I hear a man flinging over all men this mantle of sonship, I pity him, and can only excuse him because he has become confused by the lingering remembrance of primal innocency. Be not deceived. Man was made upright, but something must have happened; and that something is the sin which is in the world.

We may have a race-memory of Eden. We may stand with shaded eyes, and dimly discern the coming glory. But neither of these things must blind us to the present humiliating conditions. Sonship is only in Christ. "To as many as received him, to them gave he the power to become the sons of God." [3] Never should we have known how unfilial we are, unless we had looked on Jesus, and had beheld his spotless obedience to the Father's will. It is best for us to face the fact. We hear men, with little love for holiness, talking of God as Father, and we do not contradict them, for we are glad to have them talk of him at all. But

[2] John 3: 3.
[3] John 1: 12.

look about. Men who never pray from year to year, nor offer a single word of thanks for health and plenty; men whose God is their belly; earthly, sensual, devilish; men whose daily business is the ruining of the souls and bodies of others; betrayers of virtue, defilers of the flesh, lawless, disobedient, unholy, profane. Must I fling over all these the mantle of the Fatherhood of God? Or shall I believe the word of Jesus when he said, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye do." [4]

But there is more in this Scripture than a statement of the fact of sin. Here are also "these great and precious promises; whereby we may become partakers of the divine nature." That is, men may become as God. And the warrant for this promise is found in the fact of a correspondence between the divine and the human. The natural man cannot discern spiritual things; and it is no use to talk to him about them, for there is no correspondence, no basis of affinity, no ground of fellowship. But man was made in the image of God, and it was possible for God to take upon himself man's nature. And it is within the power of every man, and this by the grace of God, to take on also the divine nature, and to be made like God.

This is what is said in the word before us; and it is done by a single act. Man fell, we are told, by reaching after a divine attribute of knowledge. "Ye

[4] John 8: 44.

shall be as God" [5] was the lying promise of the tempter; and by listening to that we lost our first estate. But now God returns to us with the promise that after all we shall be as himself; sharers in his nature and conformed to his image. It seems strange to you that, for a single sin, so serious consequence should be entailed? That could only be because the stream was poisoned at its source, and the race sinned in its first man. But here is something quite as great. The Lord is making to himself a new creation. He has begun it in one New Man, who kept his life without spot or blemish. And in his life and federal headship we share by a single act of faith. The consequences of faith are quite as great as the consequences of disobedience. "He that believeth on him hath everlasting life." And that does not mean simply that his life is prolonged in endless time, but that it is endowed with a new and immortal beauty, capacity, and joy.

This is received the instant one believes; and, as by a new birth, he has passed from death to life. He has been already delivered from the bondage and corruption of the kingdom of darkness, and has been colonized in the kingdom of God's Son. He is born of God, a son of the Most High, a citizen of Heaven. A single sin has stained the race. We laid hold on death; and, spite of tears and cries and struggle, we have not been able to loose the hold. One single act

[5] Genesis 3: 5.

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of faith takes hold on eternal life; and, spite of sins and falls and failures, that prize can never be wrested from our grasp. And this is all by faith.

Men have said to me that the scheme of salvation is arbitrary. It is vain, they say, to shut the world up to faith. But, do you not know that the entire universe is arbitrary? There is nothing more arbitrary than the laws of mathematics, or of health, or of gravitation. Is it not strange that every son of Adam is shut up to the multiplication table? Is it not strange that if a man wants to compute numbers in China, he must use the identical system of numbers that we use here? That three and two make five there as they do here? No, there is but one law for light, or heat, or electricity, or numbers, or gravitation, in all the earth. And this is not narrow, because it also is entirely adequate. So there is but one way of salvation in all the earth; nor is this narrow, because it also is entirely adequate. Here it is said "through these promises," which only means that it is by faith in Christ. A promise is nothing, except for the value of the person who makes it. Some men make promises, and no man gives them heed. But if one promises whose character you know, then you count on that as upon the rising of the sun.

We hear a great deal in these days about education into the kingdom of God; about the natural development of righteousness. But development is only unfolding, and that the race has been doing in all the

centuries, and each age surpasses the last in abandon to sin. Education is drawing out. But how can you draw holiness from a heart that is "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked"?[6] Education can never do the work. It is like putting a new handle upon the pump, and leaving the dog in the well!

You may wonder at the fancy of bringing in a new and supernatural life by belief in precious promises. But all questions are answered by the experiences of history. Great men have been regenerated by single words of Scripture. This was true of Augustine and Luther and Spurgeon, and scores of others, whom time fails me to name. They were not only new men, but mighty sons of God. Wonderful was this? As great as the wonder in all forms of life. Look into the acorn, and tear its halves apart, and tell me if you can see therein the stalwart oak. Analyze the grain of wheat and tell me if you can see therein the waving fields. Well said Jesus, "The words which I speak to you, they are Spirit, and they are life."[7] You cannot see the Spirit, you cannot see the Life, but can you say they are not there? I hold up to you "these exceeding great and precious promises," and there are saints and missionaries, noble lives and giant charities, and mighty revolutions there. There are heaven and an eternal weight of glory wrapped up in these. And our growth in grace, and into the likeness of God, is not a matter of mending and improvement.

[6] Jeremiah 17: 9. [7] John 6: 63.

It is a new creation, by which we become "partakers of his nature."

If one of those phantom friends of the astronomers should come to this earth, and say to me: "I understand this is a beautiful place, but for one thing. I am told it is filled with sin and rebellion against the rule of God." I wish I could say to him: "My friend, you have been misinformed. There is no sin." Instead, I should have to say to him, "'Tis true, 'tis pity; and pity 'tis, 'tis true." But I could also say to him that sin cannot hold us in its cruel grasp. I would point him yonder, and say: "Do you see that golden splendor? It is the gospel of Jesus. It is filled with sweetness, and by that we are restored, and have become partakers of the divine nature. And is not that more than the fact of sin?"

VII

LOST THINGS

The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

—*Luke 19: 10.*

LOST THINGS

In some respects, the most interesting column in the daily papers is the column of "Lost and Found." One writer tells us that a great department store might be entirely stocked with the things which are lost in New York, for instance, in a single year. It is so easy for things to be lost, and it is equally easy for people to become lost. I saw an instance of this, one time, in a Canadian city. A family had spent the day in a neighboring wood, and when they prepared to return, it was found that one of the children was missing. The alarm was given; the newspapers, next morning, carried advertisements for men who would help in the search, and fifteen hundred people responded. And after two long days, the little lad was found. His clothes were in tatters; he was famished with hunger, and his tongue was swollen with thirst; but he was found, and the joy of the parents was almost equalled by the joy in all the city. It was an occasion of public rejoicing.

Jesus said of himself that he had come to seek and to save that which was lost. He said this in explanation of an extraordinary act. He was passing through one of the cities; and in doing so, he struck up an acquaintance with a curious little fellow who lived in that place. He was a dwarf—one of those little chaps

whom we sometimes see, whose legs are so much shorter than their bodies. I went to school with a chap like this. He was a good fellow and as capable as any one, but he was only about half as tall as he ought to have been. We called him "Pot-legs." And the man Jesus encountered was a chap like that. His name was Zacchæus, and he was reputed to be the biggest scoundrel in the city. He was a customs collector. But he had heard about Jesus, and when he knew that Jesus was coming to town, he had run ahead of the crowd and climbed up in a tree so he could get a good look at him as he passed. There he sat; and when Jesus came along, he looked up in the tree and pointed him out and said, "Zacchæus, come down, for I want to lodge at your house today"; and the people were simply dumbfounded. When they heard this, they all murmured. They said, "Do you suppose he does not know this man? that he is the greatest skinflint in the city?" And in answer to their complaint, Jesus said: "You ought not to be surprised that I go with Zacchæus. I know exactly who he is, and that he has become entangled in the maze of affairs and is lost; but my mission is to people like that, for the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost."

Now the heart of any religion is its conception of God, and Christianity represents that our God is a seeking God. That idea is found everywhere in the Bible. The first story in the Bible represents that no sooner had God made the earth and put man therein

than he became a little worried about him, and so he came down in the cool of the day and took a walk in the garden; and when he did not see the man, he called unto him and said, "Adam, where art thou?"[1] It is a very bold conception of God, and people have scoffed it and called it "anthropomorphic." But the point of the story is this: That God is a seeking God; and that is the representation in all parts of the Bible. It is so in the last book of the Bible, where Jesus speaks and says: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and sup with him, and he with me,"[2]—the very thing which he said in the case of Zacchæus.

I like the stories in the Bible. The Bible is the greatest story-book in the world, and everywhere it represents that God is interested in man, and especially in what man is doing. Take the story of the Tower of Babel. It represents that a company of men came together and undertook to erect a sort of Woolworth Tower that would reach up to heaven; and while they were engaged in that undertaking, the Lord came down to see what they were doing and blasted their enterprise by confusing their tongues.[3] And the point of that story is simply this: That men do not have to climb up to God, but that he comes down to them; and that is an enormous difference.

Do you know the difference between the East and the West, between China and India on the one hand,

[1] Genesis 3: 9. [2] Revelation 3: 20. [3] Genesis 11: 5f.

for instance, and Europe and America on the other? It is purely a difference of religion. The religion of the East is the religion of the Tower of Babel. It has pictured God as lofty and passive, and that, in order to reach him, men have to climb on the rising steps of dreams and hopes and dizzy speculations. And because man is frail and cannot climb all the way to heaven, then he gives up in despair. And so the religions of the East are the religions of fatalism. It is not so in the West; and the difference is this: That we have learned that God is a seeking God; that he comes down among men; and so we are a people of hope. Our hopes may sometimes be disappointing, but we know that the victory will ultimately come, and that glorious days are bound to appear just so soon as God shall come down among men.

The moment we open the New Testament we are in the presence of One who said, "I am come down from heaven." That is what Jesus said, and the people did not understand. They said, "Is not this the carpenter? and his mother and sisters—do we not know them?" [4] But Jesus persisted in saying: "I came forth from God. I am come into the world. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Did you ever see a real picture of Jesus? I do not mean the pictures which are portrayed by the artists. Those are simply the products of religious imagina-

[4] Mark 6: 3.

tions. They are beautiful, but they are not what I have in mind. I mean the picture of Jesus as found in the Bible. Did you ever see his eyes? No man living ever had eyes like Jesus. No one ever saw things as he saw them. He saw everything, but especially things which other people overlook. He saw a blind man in an alley, a sick man at Bethesda, Zacchæus in the tree, and Nathaniel under the tree, and Matthew at the receipt of custom, and John and James in the boat with their father, and little children playing in the streets. He saw the lights and shadows chase each other over the faces of people, and he saw the very thoughts in their hearts. He went everywhere looking for people, and he said he was doing only what God was doing. "Why," he said, "what man of you shall have a hundred sheep, and if he lose one, doth not leave the ninety and nine, and go after that which is lost until he find it? Or, what woman, if she have ten pieces of silver and lose one, doth she not light a candle, and get her a broom, and sweep into every nook and brush every crack and cranny till she find it? And if a man have two sons, and one of them goes astray, doth not the father sit in the window, and scan the horizon, and long for his son's return? And when he sees him coming back, all ragged and wasted and sick, doth he not run out to meet him?[5] That," said Jesus, "is a picture of God." A man makes a great supper and sends out invitations to his friends,

[5] Luke 15.

but they are fully occupied and decline to come, and offer paltry excuses. One has bought a farm, and another a pair of oxen, and a third has just been married. And they all make excuses; but the man calls his servants and says: "Go out into the streets and lanes and hunt up the people—the poor and the hungry, the maimed and the old, the man who sits at the roadside and begs; and bring them in. They are all people, and they are all precious to me."[6] "That," Jesus said, "is the picture of God." And Jesus said he came forth from God. He came to seek and to save that which is lost.

Now, how do people become lost? They are all gone astray. But how do you think it has happened? Recently the scholars have been giving their attention to what they speak of as "the psychology of sin," and it is interesting to see how their findings accord with the teaching of Jesus. The biologist tells us that each child passes through the entire physiological experience of the race, and actually carries in his own experience the history of all his ancestors. And the study of psychology has led to the belief that there is the same recapitulation in the psychic life, and that each person passes through the stages by which the race has attained to civilization, morality, and right. They tell us it has taken the race uncounted millenniums to discover the balance of right, and that the child has to achieve all this in the first few years of its life;

[6] Luke 14: 15-24.

that there was a time, for instance, when might was right; a time when deception and cunning were as necessary to preserve one's rights as locks and keys are necessary today. And so we might go through the list of possible wrongs. And the scholar refers all these to primitive impulses which he says are non-moral; and that the child must be steadied past all these danger-points to the place where right will become easy and the instinctive choice of the soul. How, then, does the liar appear? He is simply the person who, in passing through this summary of the racial experience, has been permitted to linger on the level where deception was common. How does the thief appear? He is simply the person who in this abbreviated racial experience has been permitted to linger on the stage where each person thought all things were his, if he could only get them into his hands. And so with all phases of evil.

The scholars talk, also, of the man who is "lost," and by this they mean the man who began in a simple way with a careless untruth, for instance; and who added to this for protection; and to this, again, to cover his shame, until finally falsehood has become his habit, and he can see no way to retreat from the way he has chosen; and that man, they say, is "lost." They speak of the habitual thief—by whom they mean the man who began by taking some paltry thing, and added to that when the chance arose, and to that again and again, until he is simply "lost" in the maze of dis-

honesty. And so in the whole field of wrong-doing, where one is utterly bewildered and entangled and lost. I could point you to instances in the papers today; but I refrain, for illustrations of this are in the lives of all.

There is a vast deal of truth in these theories, and our hearts confirm what these wise men say. A man can become so entangled in falsehood that he has neither the courage nor the ability to set himself right with the public; and a man can become so entangled with little peculations that his entire effort must be engaged to keep them covered up. And the both of these men are just "lost"—that is all. A man can get lost in his family; lost in his business; lost, even, in his church; that simply because he allows himself to become confused in the maze of circumstances.

All this was taught in the simplest form by Jesus; and these wanderings and entangled conditions he illustrated in three simple ways:[7] In the first place, he said: Men go astray like the senseless sheep, which simply knew that the grass was sweet to the taste, and that there, just before it, was another little tuft; and so, with nose to the ground, it nibbled along until it was far from the path, and far from the flock, and far from the shepherd's care. It was heedless, and therefore it wandered away. There are people like that. They did not intend any mischief, or purpose transgressions, but they simply followed their instincts.

[7] Luke 15.

They went astray like a sheep; and a sheep has neither foresight, conscience, nor sense of obligation. Some people live without restraint upon appetite, and all unwittingly they wander farther and farther from right, and find themselves, at last, in a sorry plight. "My people have gone into captivity unawares," said the Scripture.[8] That is, they did not know that they did it. They did not mean to do so. They were tricked and fooled into transgression. And there are people like that. I saw an instance of this but the other day. The fellow was young and had never been cared for in his home. He simply knew that certain delights were sweet at the time; but he wandered along without thought of the end until he was locked in the jail. I visited him there and endeavored to help him; but his return will be bitter, and he will carry the scars to his grave—not a bad boy, but heedless and impulsive and silly. I plead with people, therefore, to lift up their eyes and see where they are going, for if man who is meant to guide himself by intelligence and reason and will and foresight and conscience and by the eternal light of heaven, is willing to follow blind instinct only, then he will surely come at last to a condition that is lost. And it speaks very much for the sympathy of Jesus that he puts in the forefront of his parables this one which attributes sin to mere heedlessness and folly.

But Jesus spoke another parable. He said that people become lost as a coin which is heavy and round,

[8] Isaiah 5: 13.

and which rolls away into the dark and is lost through no fault of its own, but through the carelessness of a faulty guardian—a victim of circumstances. The coin rolled away in obedience to the law of gravitation. It had no inherent power of resistance. "This," said Jesus, "is a partial explanation of the wanderings of men." They are sometimes born into dangerous surroundings. They do not experience sufficient guardianship. As the woman carelessly rolled that coin from her hands, so there are parents who roll their children into ruin. There seem to be people who are powerless to control their surroundings.

What, then, can we say? Well, we must teach that, though environment is strong, people are meant to be stronger and to rule their surroundings; that, although men are influenced by what we speak of as "environment," yet they can determine what effect those surroundings shall have. Here are two men in the same sort of surroundings, and one of them yields and is ruined, and the other resists and is strengthened. So, said Jesus: "Things have a double reaction. They are either a savor of life unto life, or a savor of death unto death."[9] "Here is a stone," says one great preacher. "You can build upon it or stumble over it." Here are adverse circumstances, and you may rule them or let them rule you. Circumstances are the masters of fools, but they are the servants of those who are wise:

[9] 2 Corinthians 2: 16.

One ship sails east, one ship sails west,
While the self-same breezes blow.
'Tis the set of the sail, and not the gale
That determines which way they go.

Like the winds of the seas are the ways of the fates,
As we journey on through life.
'Tis the set of the soul that determines the goal,
And not the storm nor the strife.

The third illustration of Jesus is that of a foolish boy. He had no love for his father, and no love for his home, and he wanted to get away where he could be his own master and have his own fling, and where no news of his doings would filter back to his parents. This is a parable of every-day occurrence. I have mentioned the scholar's explanation of sin, and this is particularly true. But deep down in the heart is a sense of conscience. Every man knows he is not a sheep and not a coin, and he also knows that he need not have done the things that were wrong, unless he had chosen. That consciousness cannot be argued away. And that is the weakness of the scientific conception of sin. It omits the assertion of the will; and this, after all, is the essence of sin, and the necessity, also, in salvation.

One cannot help but be interested in the proportion of loss in these parables; of the sheep, it was one per cent.; which means this—that not very many are blameless. Of the coins, it was ten per cent.; that is, one person in ten is the victim of circumstances. And that ought to stir up good people to clean up the cities

in which they reside and drive out conditions that roll people off into ruin. But what shall we say of those who choose to do wrong? They are in the proportion of fifty per cent. as in the case of the man who had two sons. Of course, Jesus did not attach any value to these proportions, but they are suggestive nevertheless. And the message of the parable is that Jesus is the shepherd who values the sheep, even though it be but one in a hundred; the woman who cannot rest until the coin is found, though it be only one in ten; the father whose heart is broken till his son returns. The shepherd's anxiety is great; the woman's anxiety is greater; but the father's anxiety is the utmost grief.

Then there is the truth, that it matters not what remains. The utmost effort will be expended for the least that is lost. Ninety and nine cannot satisfy if one be gone; and ten thousand worlds all acclaim with the praises of God cannot satisfy if the people on this grain of stardust have strayed away; and there is more rejoicing over the return of our world than over the sinlessness of all the peoples in all the other worlds in the universe.

But some one will say, "How can you suppose that a speck of a world like this can be of such importance in the sight of God that he would give his Son to lead us back from our wanderings?" That question is only an attempt to terrorize the soul with the idea of bigness. The size of the world had nothing to do with the problem. God's actions are determined upon moral

values, and he would go after Robinson Crusoe in his lonely island, and after Friday—the sole companion—if they were the only beings who had need of his grace. The rationale of the Incarnation is that a certain man had a hundred sheep, and one of them went astray, and the shepherd went into the wilderness to find that one.

The Son of man came to seek for the lost; and they are everywhere to be found. They are not advertised, and only God knows how many there are. They do not feel lost, but feelings have nothing to do with it, when the feelings contradict the fact. An Indian was asked if he were lost and he said: "Indian not lost. Indian here. Wigwam lost."

Now tell me, are you lost? "No," you say, "I am not lost; I am here." But heaven is lost, and virtue is lost, and God is lost. Are you so tangled up in your heart that you cannot find your way out? No, that is not what I mean. The sheep did not know its peril; the coin did not know its uselessness; and the son did not realize his lost condition, when first away in that far, far country. The question is not, "Are you lost?" but, "Are you saved? Are you in the flock? Are you in circulation for good? Are you home?" Well, if not, you will be sought and hunted after and longed for until the end; and that, not by preachers, but by Jesus himself, for that is his mission. "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

VIII

EXPERIMENT AND EXPERIENCE

If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from myself.

—John 7: 17.

EXPERIMENT AND EXPERIENCE

CONTENTION is not a bad thing. It is simply the friction of human minds, and friction is not a bad thing. When two material objects are rubbed together, there often appears something that did not exist in either of them alone; as for instance, when steel and flint are struck together, fire appears. So when two minds strike together in contention, an unexpected truth sometimes flashes out that would never have appeared except for the clashing of those two minds.

It is to contention that we are indebted for some of the finest words of the Bible. For instance, the Jews attacked Jesus about what they conceived his disregard of the traditions they had built up concerning the Sabbath, and he flashed back a truth that satisfies every mind: "The sabbath was made for man and not man for the sabbath";[1] and there was nothing more to be said. So also, when they complained because he made friends of publicans and sinners, and Jesus flashed back: "They who are whole need not a physician, but they who are sick."[2] "The Son of man came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."[3]

The finest instance is found in the Scripture before

[1] Mark 2: 27.
[2] Matthew 9: 12.
[3] Matthew 9: 13.

us. Jesus had gone up to Jerusalem. It was the occasion of the Feast of the Tabernacles, and great multitudes were there, and of course the common people gathered about him and were amazed at the words which proceeded out of his mouth. Then the religious leaders drew near, and they said, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" That is, he had no credentials; he had never studied in any of the schools; he had no certificates from any of the colleges. They did not know that Jesus had learned; they did not know that school in Nazareth whose teacher was in heaven; they did not know the school in the carpenter's shop, whose sole lesson was the will of God. And they could not understand. All these people knew had been learned from books or caught from the lips of some authorized teacher. But Jesus spoke of a spiritual world that lies all about us, and whose secrets are learned, not by sight, but by simple obedience. Just as the eye is made for light and color; just as the ear is made for sound and music; just as the mind is made for worldly wisdom, so each of us has an organ of spiritual knowledge, and that organ is simple obedience. Doing and knowing are blood relations. Experiment and experience are words that come from the very same root. And they represent things that cannot grow very far apart. Does any one wish he had a Christian experience? Then let him determine to make the Christian experiment. Does any one wish that he knew Jesus? Who he is

and what he can do? Then let him determine to do as Jesus says, that is, to follow him, and all doubt will disappear. That is what Jesus said. The enemies were against his teaching. They said it was not true teaching concerning God. "Very well," said Jesus, "let us put it to the test." The true test in religion is pragmatism; will it work? That is what this passage means: "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God or whether I speak from myself." Jesus here speaks of the will of God, and that is the most important consideration in all the world.

But what do I mean by "the will of God"? Some people think of it as something entirely outside themselves, or something to which they are to be resigned, and especially when things go against them; but that is not the idea of the will of God, for the will of God is a friendly thing, and it is also a very personal thing. There is a general will of God, of course; that is universal; that is revealed all about us. It is written in the Scripture and written, also, in all things created. It is written in our bodies; and to keep that will means health, and to abuse that will means illness. It is written in our consciences, and to keep that will means peace, and to abuse that will means distress and reproach and unrest. These are things that can be known by all men. They are universal, like the laws of light and heat and gravitation. That is the Lord's general will. He has also a private will for each per-

son, and that will can be known only to God and to the person in question; and the difference between these two wills is easily seen when we consider that the general will makes only for character, while the personal will makes also for career. It is the general will that makes a man an upright citizen; but the personal will makes him a lawyer, or a doctor, or a mechanic, or a teacher, or a policeman, or a preacher. And that same will makes one man to be a preacher in his native country, and sends another to labor in foreign lands.

Well, then, how can one know this personal will? Not the general will in character, but the particular will in career? When one lifts up his voice and says, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" is there an answer to be heard so one can know this particular will? Well, of course, one must use his reason. Reason is a Godlike faculty, and of course it gives leading; but reason itself is not enough. To this must be added experience, for there are some paths that we walk more than once, and the light of the Lord is given to us when we walk them the first time. Then he lighteth beacons along the way, and by these one can walk again. This is both memory and experience. He would have us look about and reflect; and if he has closed all things until only one way remains, then that is the way of the Lord. Moreover, I think he would have us to consider the advice of others and the welfare of others and the example of others.

I read of a man who was coming into the Mersey River, one night, on a steamer. It was the first time for him, and he did not know how the pilot could bring the ship into that narrow channel in the dark, so he asked him; and the pilot pointed to three lights in the distance and said: "It is very simple. I sail by the compass until those three lights blend into one, and then the course is straight ahead." According to this, a man had better sail by the word of the Lord until three lights blend into one—his own convictions, the set of circumstances, and the advice of friends. Then the will of the Lord lies straight ahead. That is a very good illustration and would help many people. But it is mechanical, after all. It would be very much finer if men could know the will of the Lord. Well, that is what Jesus promises. That is what he says in this Scripture: "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God or whether I speak from myself."

Here is the secret of Christian knowledge. Any man may know. If he will do God's will, he shall know God's mind. The Scripture says that "God's thoughts are not as our thoughts." And yet here is the promise: "If any man will do God's will, he shall know God's thought."

But somebody says, "How can one do his will?" That is the very dilemma. We want to *know;* and we are told to *do.* Here is the solution: The Scripture does not say, "If any man do, he shall know,"

but, "If any man will do." The whole sense of the passage is in that word "will." It means that if any man is willing to do, he shall know. He does not need to do in order to know; but he must be willing to do. The word "will" in this passage is not the sign of the future tense; it is the sign of a disposition of heart.

Now the thing begins to clear up. At first thought, it looked as though the doing came first, and then the knowing; and that, of course, seemed absurd. Now we see that the order is plain: First comes the willing, then the knowing, then the doing. That is, the whole thing is thrown back to the will; and the will is the most regal faculty of the soul. That is the place where choices are made and decisions are formed and orders are given. Is one willing to do God's will? Then he shall know that will, and the way becomes open and plain and sufficient. Do you not see how this fits into the whole method of Jesus? To be willing to do God's will is simply another word for faith, and this opens out into obedience; and obedience is what Robertson calls "the organ of spiritual knowledge." This simply being willing is the highest form of obedience. It has both the spirit and the form of obedience. The highest form of obedience is not in the act, but in the spirit with which the act is performed. I was a teacher, one time, and I had in my school a young man who was as sullen as a demon. He had dominated the school and driven out all other teachers, and on occa-

sion this spirit appeared before me. The school was heated with wood, and the wood was stored in a chamber convenient to the stove; and one day I found that the wood had all been maliciously thrown out into the yard; that it had been done through spite by this young man. I called him before me and requested him to go out and gather up that wood and replace it just as he had found it; and he refused. Then I ordered him to do it, and he knew there was no alternative; and he did it. But all work in the school had to be suspended while he did that thing in his fury. There was obedience, but it was not willing obedience, nor true obedience; for true obedience is a thing of the spirit. "A certain man," says the Scripture, "had two sons; and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go work today in my vineyard,' and the young man said, 'I will not'; but afterward he repented and went. He came to the second and said likewise; and he answered, 'I go, Sir,' and he went not. Now whether of these twain did the will of his father?"[4] Here, obedience comes out in all of its true colors. It is the finest test of the spirit.

How to know God's particular will? Well, tomorrow, some difficulty arises in your way and lies across the threshold of your life. It may be an item of business over which some suspicion has come; but this suspicion intrudes upon your conscience and bothers your prayers, and you can't decide just what to do.

[4] Matthew 21: 28-31.

Well, he that doubteth is condemned already. Then what shall one do about it? Shall he simply review it all and balance the pros and cons and sum up the points in favor and against it and, striking a balance, decide in that way? That is what a man of the world would do. That is all he knows how to do. That is settling a question of conscience by reason. But that is not the way of the man of faith. He goes about it in another way. He does not approach a question like that from its outlook, but from its inlook. He gives his soul to self-examination. First, he will make sure of his inner heart and set that right with God; and then he will know what he ought to do. He will fall back on the word of Jesus and say: "If I am willing to do God's will, he will not lead me in the dark. His very spirit will show the way."

To search for God's will with an obedient will is scarcely to search at all; for to the pure in heart, his will is always apparent. It is as if he saw God. And if, sometimes, it shall still be dark, and the will is still obedient, then let the soul stand still and wait. "Wait, I say, on the Lord," and so surely as morning always follows the night, the light of the Lord will come.

How God reveals his will I do not know. I do not know how he reveals his general will; much less how he reveals his particular will. But there seems to be a meeting-place between God and man, between the will of God and the will of man, and that place is only in the obedient heart. There dwells the eternal

God. That is what he says: "I dwell, saith the Lord, in the high and holy place. With him, also, that is of a humble heart, to lead the humble and direct the contrite." [5] He no more truly led his people through day and night, through sea and wilderness, than he leads his people today. He no more truly went before Abraham than he goes before the believing soul today. He no more truly walked with Enoch than Enoch walked with him; and the way they took was the way of the Lord, the shining way of holiness.

For whom is this great truth? This suggests the universality of it. "If any man will do his will." It was the law of knowledge for the Man, Christ Jesus; and it is the law of knowledge for all men. The child can learn this law, as in his home he learns the beauty of obedience. He can learn the way of the Lord as he learns to obey his parents. That is what the Scripture says: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Parents, provoke not your children to wrath, but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord." [6] In other words, every Christian home is a little kingdom of God, in which the father is king and the mother is queen and the children are obedient subjects; and the very first lesson any child should learn is the lesson of obedience, and that, an obedience in spirit. This is the beginning of knowledge.

[5] Isaiah 57: 15.
[6] Ephesians 6: 1-4.

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And so I begin to conclude, and of the things I have said, this is the sum: That every man's life is a plan of God; that for its fulfilment there is a twofold will, or there are concentric wills, an outer and general will that makes for character, and an inner and personal will that makes for career; that the former produces the upright citizen, and the second produces the Christian; that the second will can be known, but it is known only by experiment. That is, experience comes by experiment; and the whole thing hinges upon the will or, rather, upon the willingness, for if any man be willing to do his will, he shall know.

Then tell me, are you willing to do God's will? That is the beginning of the Christian experience, and all things from that point become plain. The knowledge given to the willing spirit is like the light in your automobile. It is enough for each moment as you proceed, and it shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

To know God's will is, therefore, not so difficult as some people suppose. It is within the possibility of all.

IX

NO RELIGION WITHOUT WORSHIP
NO CHARACTER WITHOUT RELIGION

And, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath Day.

—Luke 4: 16.

NO RELIGION WITHOUT WORSHIP NO CHARACTER WITHOUT RELIGION

THE world in which we live is a world of laws, by which we mean that things transpire in an orderly sequence. And the curious thing about these laws is that they are universal; that they are bound together; that they never vary; and that, to them, there is no exception.

We have before us a simple and obvious law: No religion without worship; no character without religion. And this law is as unchanging as any other law in the universe. It is universal, and to it there is not a single exception.

There are eighteen silent years in the history of Jesus. And like the throne of God, these years are wrapped in clouds and mystery, into which no one has ever been able to peer. As a child we read that Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man; as a lad of twelve we find him standing in the temple, both asking and answering questions. Then the curtain falls, and for eighteen long years he is hidden from view, and when we next see him, at the age of thirty, he is standing in the synagogue with the sacred roll in his hand and teaching the people. But what was he doing during all those years? Did he enter the classroom of some great

teacher, as Paul sat at the feet of Gamaliel? There is no record of any such thing. And yet somewhere he learned; some one was his teacher; and something emancipated him from all the limitations of race and class and color and sex, until he became the first man who ever loved all the world, and the teacher not of the Hebrew race only, but of the human race.

Of one thing we may be assured: That the overmastering influence in Jesus' growing life was his custom of worship. It was his custom to enter the synagogue on the Sabbath Day. Within those sacred walls he pondered the great mother ideas of right and wrong, and of duty as set forth in the Hebrew Scriptures. There he learned of the heroes of the past; Abraham and Moses, Joseph and Samuel, and Saul and David, and Elisha and the Prophets. There he brooded upon the social ideas of Isaiah, and Amos, and Hosea, and Malachi, until he dreamed at night of a new social order and a golden age, and got his first glimpse of what he afterwards named "the Kingdom of God." The genius of Jesus' character and the ordering of his life are revealed in this custom. In other words, he discovered in this custom the law of which I am speaking: No religion without worship; no character without religion. And like all laws, being once discovered, it became binding upon all people; and, therefore, this law he laid on his people, on the principle of the philosopher who said, "Whatever is best and necessary for the children of genius must be

made a duty and a habit for all lesser people." In other words, Jesus had no artificial habits. Whatever he did grew out of the nature of things, and what he did can well be adopted as the cheerful and regular habits of all people.

There is a difference between law and habit. What law is to things inert, that habit is to things that live. Religion is a life. It is simply the life of God in the human soul. Dead things accumulate according to laws outside of themselves. But living things grow by obeying the laws of food and exercise and sleep; intellect, by reading and reflection and conversation and travel; culture, by practising the refinements of good conduct; and religion, by worship. And these rules of conduct we speak of as "habits." By practise, the orator and actor acquire a rich resonance of voice; by practise, the singer retains mastery of his vocal cords, and thus produces that fulness of tone which would otherwise "flat" when he sings; by practise of the courtesies of life, refinement and culture become second nature, and by practise, religion becomes first nature. An actor is said to have asked Wendell Phillips how he attained his supremacy on the lecture platform; and the orator said, "By getting a thousand nights back of me!" A pupil once asked the artist Turner how he, also, could succeed, and the artist said: "Draw! Draw! Paint! and still paint; then tear up your work and begin a new canvas!" The sculptor Rodin is said to have been at a banquet one

night in Paris, and during the progress of the evening, he was seen to take from his pocket a small bit of bronze and turn it over and over, until its beauty filtered into his mind. And so the greatest of modern sculptors is known to have been a learner even to the last hours of his life.

Now, if artists learn by painting; if orators learn by speaking; if authors learn by writing, and genteel folk by practising the courtesies of life, then Christian people must learn to pray and pity and love and serve, by praying and pitying and loving and serving. That is as much a law of good living as gravitation is a law of the universe. We are sometimes dazzled by genius; but genius is not so much a gift as it is an achievement. Genius is simply a capacity for infinite painstaking and unceasing toil. And if there is such a thing as genius in religion, it is simply a matter of constant painstaking. It was practised by Jesus. And then he said, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."[1] This is the all-embracing program of Jesus.

From his earliest waking moment to the last moment of his conscious life, Jesus practised the presence of God, and in so doing, he increased in personal joy and in favor with God. He went about doing good, and so practised service. And as his custom was, he entered the synagogue on the Sabbath Day, and thus ac-

[1] Luke 9: 23.

quired an authority, so that when the hour came for him to enter his ministry, he stood up in that very synagogue and spake in such manner that all who heard him marveled at the words of wisdom which proceeded out of his mouth. And this in accordance with the law of which I am speaking: No religion without worship; no character without religion. I have said this formula is a law, and as much so as the laws of light, or of heat, or of any other law in the universe. It is quite as universal.

Our confidence in things is in their reliability. Imagine trying to live in a world of irregularity, of hit and miss, of caprice and chance. Suppose we lived in a world where fire sometimes furnished heat and sometimes cold; where the sugar-beet was sweet one season and sour another; where the sun warmed everything in the morning, and possibly froze everything in the afternoon; where one child in a family was born with two hands and two feet and two eyes, but the second one might be born with one hand and three feet and four eyes. In a world of such moods, in a capricious world of that kind where everything happened by chance, we should simply despair. But we do not live in that kind of a world. We live in a world where everything takes place according to system, and, as one preacher says, "A handful of violets plucked at dawn with the dew still dripping from them is no more according to law than the religion of David, who said, 'Morning, noon, and night, do I pray,'" or than

the religion of Jesus, who went, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the Sabbath Day.

Sometimes I think the greatness of man is found in his capacity to suffer; and, at other times, that his greatness is measured by his capacity to adjust himself to things, to the number of laws he can learn to obey, until they become naturally a part of himself.

In recent days, the American people have been startled by what they speak of as a "crime wave," and they have tried to put the blame for this on the war; but they are utterly wrong. The war had nothing to do with it. The explanation is found in the fact that a generation has grown up that has had little or no moral instruction. Truant officers are appointed to see that our children are in the public schools from nine in the morning until three in the afternoon, and that, for five days in the week. Parents realize there is no place for their children in business unless they can read and write and cipher, and have at least a smattering of the allied subjects of history and geography and science; so the State and the parents have conspired to send our children to school. But when it comes to religion, they are utterly neglected. They know nothing of the Ten Commandments. They are ignorant of the general principles of obedience to law in respect of the home and of business. They are pagans. That is the reason the jails are filled with the youth of the land; why hold-ups are a daily occurrence; why murders are so frequent, and suicides are

so common. Two million young people arrested for theft and burglary in a single year! A hundred hold-ups in a single month! Uncounted millions of dollars changing hands each year through swindle and trickery and the confidence game; as is witnessed by the trials now going on, not only in the city of Washington, but in many of our States, as in Pennsylvania and Indiana and Colorado today; forgetting what Webster said, that "Moral principles are a part of the common law of the land." And all this because we have forgotten the law of which I am speaking: No religion without worship; no character without religion.

The people have forgotten the churches, and innumerable distractions have arisen to rob us of the Sabbath, and we have not had fortitude enough to withstand them. We do not live in the day of our fathers. Since their time, the automobile has come, and every one rides in the automobile; roads have been projected into scenery hitherto unknown, and Sunday is used to explore that scenery. Besides that, the movie has come. It is found in every city and town and hamlet. And because the people are paid on Saturday and have most money on Sunday, the movies have capitalized that day as the great day of the show. And so I might mention a score of other distractions, but the principle is the same. We have grown up a people who do not worship, and who are weak in character, because they are without religion. Doctor Hillis tells

of a preacher who served some years ago in Chicago, and this preacher told his people to go into the parks or forests, or out upon the lakes on Sunday if they thought they could worship to better purpose there than within the walls of the church. But this preacher learned that men who do not worship God at one time and in one place with other families soon cease to worship God at all, and they starve their religious faculties; that when men cease bowing the knee to God, they soon cease bowing the mind and the heart. And so that preacher came back to a firm belief in the custom of Jesus, who went each Sabbath into the synagogue.

People complain that they do not get anything out of the service of public worship or out of a sermon by an indifferent preacher. But the gain in worship does not lie in that direction. Jesus did not enter the synagogue because the preachers were his superiors or because the sermons contained more wisdom than the books. He entered the synagogue for worship, and prayer, and friendship, and reflection, and that he might meet his fellow men in the great moments when souls are plastic and are shot through with a light divine. People are concerned today regarding the matter of Americanization; how the native-born can assimilate the foreign-born. It can be done best by example, and that, especially in the field of religion.

Religion is not a solitary experience; it is social.

As Doctor Hillis says, "When flint and steel come together, there is something leaps forth which is not in either of them; and when souls meet together in worship, there appears a new thing that could not otherwise appear. . . A thousand leaves," he says, "work together to produce a tree, and a million cells work together to produce a human body, and innumerable souls work together to produce the Kingdom of God." As a boy, I read *Robinson Crusoe*. And the author tells us that everything started for his hero when the man Friday appeared on the scene; for his coming meant the beginning of society. And Jesus tells us that when two or three are met together in his name, there he is in the midst;[2] and there is a Christian church.

The American people are not good church-goers. They regard church-going as an elective. If they feel like going, they go; but if the mood is not on them, they "pass it up." But the laws of the Lord remain just the same: There is no religion without worship; no character without religion. Then do you not think we could all do better? Well, if we can do better, then we ought to do better; and if we cannot do better, then the end is in sight. The churches cannot endure unless the people shall give them a place of pre-eminence; that is, put them above all other interests. The churches cannot be assigned a secondary place in our affections any more than Jesus can be assigned

[2] Matthew 18: 20.

a secondary place in our love. People tell us they have no interest in the churches; forgetting that interest always is vitally related to capital. Interest in churches is like interest in a bank; if people do not invest their capital in banks, they can get no interest. They tell us they do not get anything out of the services; but maybe other people do. If instead of seeing how much they can get out of a particular service, they will endeavor to see how much they can put into it, they will find unexpected values. The gospel is a great unifier. The church is a great family in which all classes are numbered, a great school in which all people are pupils, a great hospital in which all can find healing. And the custom of meeting for worship in the presence of God on the Sabbath is the Lord's only method for solving our problems, whether personal, or economic, or industrial. And if this method should fail, then the whole method will fail; but the law is justified, just the same—that there is no religion without worship; no character without religion.

And as a Christian preacher, I ought also to add another clause: No salvation without Christ. This is the essential gospel, for "there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Of course, if one does not want salvation, then the message stops at that point; but if he does want salvation, he must start with this clause. This is really the first proposition. The object of salvation is perfection of character, and there is no character without

religion. Religion is the life of God in the soul, and as such, it must express itself in worship. That is, there is no religion without worship. These three clauses, therefore, complete the whole circle of the gospel.

No character without religion;
No religion without worship;
No salvation without Christ.

X

PARTICULAR PROVIDENCES

Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

—*Matthew 10: 29, 30.*

PARTICULAR PROVIDENCES

In the year 1813, there was a man named Shaw who went to South Africa with his heart set upon preaching the gospel in some particular section of that region. But, through the jealousy of the Boers, this was forbidden. And, almost broken-hearted, this man took what little money he had, and bought a yoke of oxen and a new cart, and loaded therein his young wife, and his paltry effects, and headed the oxen inland, "not knowing whither he went." For thirty-seven days they traveled until three hundred miles had been passed; and they pitched their tent to rest, that particular day, near a company of Hottentots. The black men sent over to know who the strangers were; and the strangers inquired who the black men were. And it was found that the Hottentots were a delegation from an inland tribe, and had been sent by their people toward the coast to find them a missionary! Henceforth Shaw cast in his lot with them. "And if they had been one-half hour earlier," he said, "or if we had been one-half hour later, we should never have met!" And this, after journeying three hundred miles into the trackless waste of Africa!

Now, I have recited this incident to introduce one of the most precious truths of the Scripture, which is the doctrine of providence; by which is meant the

continuous and minute agency of God, through which he makes all events to fulfil his original purpose.

Almost every man will acknowledge a providence in great events; in the avalanche, the earthquake, the hurricane; in famine and in war. But they forget that there can be no providence in great events without the same kind of providence in small events. Everything in this world is prearranged and superintended by providences, or else all is given over to chance. God is the God of the hills; but he is also the God of the valleys. He cannot hold the seas in the hollow of his hand—as the Bible says he does—without also holding every drop in the seas. That's what is meant by this Scripture—the minuteness of providence. Why, the "very hairs of your head are all numbered." The providence of God descends to the dust in the street, to the gnats in the air; it reaches to the sparrow in the heavens, and to the tiniest fish in the sea! It controls the massive orbs in the sky, but it also estimates the tear-drop that shines in the eye of the child who weeps for a broken toy.

Now this is a truth that is writ large in the Scripture. Let me cite a familiar story to show you how little events are directed of God as well as are great events. When Joseph stood at the head of Egyptian affairs, and his brethren had acknowledged their wrong-doing, then Joseph said that the Lord had sent him hither. But if the result of this incident was appointed of God, then God must have been in the lesser

events through which that result was obtained. The brethren of Joseph tended the flocks; and Jacob, their father, wanted to send unto them. But why did he send Joseph? And why did he want to send a message at all? And why did he send Joseph and not another instead? "A mere coincidence," you say. But I call you to witness that this whim of Jacob to send to his sons and the incidents of this errand are all essential to the base of this structure. Well, Joseph went; and his brethren had left Shechem and gone to Dothan. Why did Joseph follow them there? Why didn't he turn back when he failed to find them at Shechem? But he went on, and arrived among them just as they were talking of him and his dreams. And they put the boy into a pit, while they sat down and ate the lunch he had brought. Some Ishmaelites came along at that time. But why did they come? and why come just at that time? And why were they journeying to Egypt, and not going back to their own land? And what did they want of a slave? However, Joseph was sold to these cut-throats and taken to Egypt. Then, why did Potiphar buy him in Egypt? And why did he have a wife? and especially a wife such as he had? And why was Joseph thrown into prison? And why were the butler and baker also thrown into prison with him? "All a mere happen-so," you say; but I am only saying that these incidents were all necessary to the result, which Joseph said was of God. Then came the dreams, and the release, and the prompt

elevation of Joseph. And you can take away any one of these incidents, and the whole chain is broken; which means that if you dissect any bit of history at any time, you will find the providence of God in the minutest details, just as well as in the completed whole. How do you chance to be where you are? It didn't chance! You may not like your circumstances; and you may chafe against them. But they are there, and you are inside of them, as a bird is inside its cage. And your circumstances are God's present appointment for you. You are free, of course; but only as the bird is free. He can skip, and sing, and play, and be true to his nature as a bird; his back will shine, his song be bright, and he may fill the whole house with his music. But he is still in the cage. And so it is with every last one of us. "The way of man is not in himself. It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." "The lot is cast in our laps, but the disposing thereof is of God." Moreover, circumstances are just as real as are the brass bars for the cage of the bird.

And will you notice that providence is punctual, and that God keeps time with himself? The Ishmaelites came along just at the appointed time; and the Hottentots came along just in time to meet Shaw; and Phillip went down into the desert just in time to meet the man from the Southland; and I came along just in time to meet you! A coincidence? Just the same kind of coincidence that determined the country into which

you were born; and the age in which you should live; the same kind of coincidence that determined that some of your brothers should be older than you, and some younger; and who your father should be, and your mother; that determined that this church should be located just where it is; and that I should stand here the twelfth in the line of its pastors.

The providence of God is seen in the littlest of things. Mohammed was fleeing from his pursuers; and hid himself in the dark of a cave. A spider, disturbed, threw her web across the entrance, and the pursuers rushed past, with the thought that no one had entered that place which was strung with the webs of a spider. And the impostor's life was spared. And the whole history of Mohammedanism for fifteen hundred years has hung on that trifling event. Robert Bruce had been defeated six times in his wars with England, and had disappeared and hidden himself in a barn. Above him a spider was trying to throw herself from one beam to another, and six times she failed. Then she tried the seventh time and succeeded. And Bruce said to himself, "I'll try once more!" and he triumphed at Bannockburn.

The providence of God is seen in the tiniest things. The birds in the autumn congregate for a distant flight, and they circle about in wild confusion; and the wing of each bird seems to be stamped with the place to which he must go. And though they whirl about, above, and below, to the east and to the west, they do

not diverge a hair's breadth from their predestined track. And in their flight, not a one ever falls to the ground without the will of the Father.

Blessed, then, is the man who can see the providence of God in the tiniest things. The fish in the sea have their captains as well as the steamers have pilots. You say there is the will of God in the shining stars? And I say there is the will of God also in the glimmer of the glowworm at night-time. All things live and move and have their being in God.

And some one says that is fate; not knowing the difference between fate and the providence of God, of which Jesus was speaking. The difference is this: That while fate is blind, providence has eyes; that while fate is like an arrow shot from a bow, and that flies on and on and sees no target in the distance, providence sees the end from the beginning; and "all things work together for good to those who love God." That is, they do not occur because they must occur, but because there is a sufficient reason why they should occur. God is an architect, and has marked out the history of things in advance. With a glance of his eye he has determined the aisles adown which the people must walk. And with the word of his mouth he sets up the pillars of time. Does this sound like a new form of teaching? It is within the bounds both of Scripture and of reason. Why, even the thoughts of men are under the sovereignty of God. Here is a familiar illustration: It was the intention of God that

Jesus should be born in Bethlehem of Judea, and that at a particular time. But the mother lived in Nazareth, and the time had nearly arrived. Then Cæsar took a whim to tax the world, and determined that each should enroll himself in the city of his family descent. What was the necessity for that? God knew what to do with Cæsar; and Mary was obliged to make the trip; and the child was born in the place where the prophets had said years before: and that in the fulness of time; and that also because of the providence of God.

And the providence of God is universal, by which I mean that it looks to all parts of the globe. I have sometimes sat in an art gallery, and looked into the face of a portrait; and it also was looking directly at me. And go wherever I would in that room, that picture was still looking at me. If I went to the farthest corner, he looked; if I stood to one side, he still looked. And so with the providence of God. Wherever I am, it is there, and the darkness is as bright as day. You can never be banished from God. You can be sent to Siberian snows; or to Australia, where men dig for gold; to the desert where not a blade of grass can be found; or to the seas where the winds howl in their fury and the waves stretch forth their hands as if they would pluck the stars from the sky. But I tell you, God will be there. You may sink in the sea until the gurgle of your voice is lost in the gurgle of the water; and still God is there.

Your strength may ebb away until in a tottering old age, you set out toward the valley of the shadow of death, and even there you need fear no evil; for you shall not go alone in that place. And if you make your bed in Sheol—behold, he is there!

Some of you have friends who are far away, but the eye of the Lord looks on them. One part of the earth is not so near to the sunlight as another; and there is night in some part of the earth all the time. But all parts of the earth are equally near to God, and in his presence there is no night. He is everywhere. It was this which comforted Mungo Park in the Sahara Desert. He had been robbed and stripped and left for dead, when suddenly he saw a little piece of moss. He took it up and looked at its beauty, and he said to himself: "Then the hand of God is here! Though I call aloud and no human ear can hear, and only the jackals answer, yet God is here, and he hears." Then, wherever you may be, God is there; whatever period of your life, God is there. It is his eye that first looks upon the babe in the home; his greeting that is first given to the bride while the preacher is still speaking; and when other eyes are wearied with watching by the side of old age, he is there. In the battle, he sees through the smoke; in the earthquake, it is his hand that makes the trembling to cease; and in all times, and places, and climates, he is there!

It is not necessary that we should see the ways of

God, nor know his reasons, for we are the children of faith. Moreover, the providence of God is an intricate thing, and his ways are past finding out. Joseph brought his two sons to his aged father to be blessed, and Jacob was blind; and he put forth his hands and laid them on the heads of the boys, and as he did so, he crossed his hands, in this way—the one over the other. "Not so!" said Joseph. But Jacob said, "Even so," and he blessed them! He would not give his blessing in any other way.[1] And so God sometimes blesses us with his hands crossed. "Do not deal so with me," we say in our prayers; and he says, "Even so, for my blessing is held in this hand." "Uncross thy hands," we plead; but he answers, "I wish to give thee the greater blessing, and so I have crossed my hands."

You want to see through providence, do you? It can't be done. You want to see why your affliction came, and how that particular thing can bring good to you, and why you must endure that particular annoyance. But you cannot see, for they are the appointments of God; and clouds and darkness are round about his throne. But you can believe; you can honor God by trusting him. And so, dear heart, take up that burden, and know that you do not bear it alone. I said, we are like birds in a cage. But one can be true to the heart of the bird and fill both the cage and the house with music; or one can mope and beat his wings

[1] Genesis 48: 19.

on the cage to his ruin. So it is with us all. The alternative is within ourselves.

And the providence of God goes straight ahead. Man marks out, and plans, and says, I shall build in this manner; and when his building is partly completed, he stops and pulls it down, and starts over again. But God does no such thing. In the eternities past, he had his plans, both holy and wise; and he has reached this point without let or break or alteration. He is building us into his plan; and directly forward he goes. The plans are not in ourselves—the whole thing is like this:

I was traveling, one time, in a train. On the way I formed a pleasant acquaintance and looked forward to days of real pleasure with my newly found friend. But as we drew into a city, the friend made ready to leave. I protested, but he said he represented his firm, and his ticket led by a different route. And when we came to the station, a great train stood ready to start on lines that were laid out before either of us was born. When last I saw him, I was standing on the rear of my train, and he was entering his train, and I waved him good-bye. He had gone his way, and I had gone mine. Why separate? Because we just had to. Our routes lay in different directions, and were laid before we started, and before we had made each other's acquaintance. And I have seen it so in a thousand instances. That explains why we are here at the present. We are traveling in the same train, and

nobody knows whose turn it will next be to leave. This explains why you are here, and your loved ones are not with you now. The separation just had to occur, but neither of you can go out of the care of God; for the providence that reaches to the sparrow, and to the hairs of your head, reaches through all time and all places, and through the eternity of God. I delight in the truth of God's providence.

XI

JOB AND PAUL AT THE LONG-DISTANCE TELEPHONE

How can a man be just before God?

—Job 9: 2.

We conclude, therefore, that a man is justified by faith, without the works of the law.

—Romans 3: 28.

JOB AND PAUL AT THE LONG-DISTANCE TELEPHONE

Nobody knows who Job was. The scholars are not able to identify him more definitely than as an Arabian Emir of great wealth and integrity—"a perfect man, and upright," as the Scripture says—"one who feared God and eschewed evil." And one day the clouds of adversity gathered about him, and the thunders roared, and the lightnings flashed, and the storms descended; and that night Job lay down, the poorest man in all the land. His flocks were all gone; his family had perished; and, as for himself, he was stricken with the most loathsome and most painful of all Eastern diseases. Only one thing was left him, and that was a blasphemous wife; and she bade him curse God and die!

For days Job pondered in silence the mystery of his misfortune and suffering, but the problem was too large for him. Is suffering the outcome of sin? Is misfortune dealt out with an even hand? Surely the ways of the Lord are all upright. But just how to reconcile that with the things that transpire and especially with misfortune and pain, was beyond his understanding. There was an unknown term in the problem, and that was past finding out. Therefore, on the rugged heights of the distant past, wrapped in

the mist of insufferable pain, his eyes dimmed with the tears of his anguish, Job one day cried out in the intenseness of his soul, and said, "How can a man be just before God?"

And that question has come echoing down the centuries; reenforced and intensified as it has reverberated from side to side of human existence; until Paul emerged far down the long ages. Deep answers unto deep. The deep of one man's soul answers to the deep of all men's souls. God has made us so alike that one heart answers to another heart, as a telephone instrument in one city answers to the same kind of an instrument in another. The long-distance telephone is not a modern invention. The listening ear has always detected the voice of the past; and the questions of the past are being answered in the experience of the living present. A human heart is the same in all ages and in all places. Hearts are perfectly adjusted, and the texts before us illustrate the original form of the long-distance telephone. From the bitterness of his soul, Job calls up the great central heart of things, and says, "Say, can any one tell me how a man can be just before God?" And a voice breaks in and says: "I can. We conclude that a man is justified by faith." And Job says, "Who is speaking?" And the voice answers back, "Saul of Tarsus." And Job says, "How about works?" And Paul says, "They are not necessary." And Job says, "Aren't they?" And Paul says: "No. A man is justified by faith without

works of the law." And Job says, "Can you give me an instance?" And Paul says: "Yes. Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." And then Central rang off, as Central often does while we are talking, and there has been nothing added to that conversation since then.

Now with this introduction, I want to take up Paul's answer to Job's question; for the question is one of the most vital and one of the most vexing that has ever been asked. And surely no person has ever reached any considerable age without some time or other putting it also to himself. And he does this because of the known effect of sin.

The effect of wrong-doing is twofold: It works derangement and disaster in one's own soul, and it separates one from all those who are better and purer than himself. It effects a sort of isolation. It is true that if a man has sinned no worse than his fellows; if he is the same kind of liar, and no worse; if he has indulged the same forms of appetite, and no worse; if he lives the same kind of life, and no worse, then he feels no isolation. But let him do a deed that he knows makes him more sinful than those by whom he is surrounded, and immediately he feels himself environed by an invisible wall. Let him rob his employer's till, for instance, or forge his friend's name to a note, and the isolation settles instantly upon him. No one knows what he has done, and no one senses his isolation. But he knows it. He may go into so-

ciety, or proceed in business; he may even go to church and teach in the Bible school, but all the while he is conscious of a kind of separation between him and his employer; between him and the man who sits beside him; between him and the man with whom he shakes hands; between him and his wife and his family. They do not know what he has done. They are not estranged from him, but he is estranged from them; and that because sin isolates one from all who are better. And if a man comes to a consciousness of the purity and holiness of God, there comes with it a sense of estrangement also from him. That's why Adam and Eve are said to have hidden when they heard the voice of God walking in the Garden. They didn't use to hide from his presence; but the moment they did the thing that was wrong, then two things took place: They knew they were defiled, as the Scripture says; and they felt themselves estranged from God.

Now, Job's question was this: "How can one bridge the yawning chasm between man and God? How can he banish the sense of estrangement? How can a man be just before God?" And Paul answers, that a man can be justified only in one way, and that is by faith, and without the works of the law.

I speak, therefore, of justification, its author, its nature, and its effects. But I concede in the very beginning that there is much beyond my understanding, and vastly more than I can possibly pack into a single discourse.

I. *The Author of Justification Is God.* And what he does is wholly of grace; and grace is favor upon which one hasn't the slightest sort of claim.

Between sinful man and a holy God, there was a yawning gulf, and if man wanted to bridge that gulf, he couldn't do so. He had nothing to offer but works, and they could never atone for wrong-doing. The tears of today can never atone for the sins of yesterday; and the obedience of today can never atone for the disobedience of yesterday; and that for the very simple reason that the obedience of today is only the rightful duty of today. To illustrate this: No fidelity to a friend today can repair an injury done to him yesterday. Today's fidelity is an obligation of today; and that being so, then it cannot be used to cover the neglect, or the wrong-doing, of the day that has passed. So you see where the law is weak (and by the " law " is meant the published will of the Lord). To conform to the law would be well enough for the present; but the past is against one, and that's why the most painstaking morality cannot afford salvation. If one has always kept the law, then he may look to the law for salvation. But Paul said this could not be done. He said that man wasn't to do right as a condition of coming to God; but he was to come to God as a prerequisite of doing right. The apostle had been accustomed to think of God as sitting upon the summit of Mount Sinai; as of One to whom men must climb by a painful process of obedience to the

law. Then, he said, he came to think of God as different from this; that he was not on the top of Mount Sinai, but down on the plain where men were sacrificing to the golden calf, and where they had abandoned themselves to right and wrong; down here in the midst of sinful and wicked and abominable living. And this in order that he might put a new life into people. That is what I mean by salvation by grace, as opposed to salvation by works. And the fact lying beneath all this is that God loves people; and that, irrespective of anything they have done. A little girl was asked, "Do people love you when you are naughty?" "No," said the little girl; "but Mother does." But mother does! That's the gospel. Do people love you when you do wrong? No, but God does. I may estrange myself from him, but it is utterly impossible for me to estrange him from me. "Why do you love me?" That's what the mother asked the child, and the little child said, "I love you—because I love you!" And that's the heart of the gospel. That's what the apostle says—"For the great love wherewith he hath loved us." Explain why the mother loves the child, and you explain why God loves man. This is why he is the author of justification. "Justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ."[1] That's the heart of the gospel.

Man, then, is not the author of his own justification. He is the author of his sin; he originated his apos-

[1] Romans 3:24.

tasy; but to return, he cannot. Some other hand must reach to him; some stronger hand must rescue him. It is God who justifies; and the matter is wholly by grace, and man receives it simply through faith; that is, by simply accepting it.

II. And now I want you to notice *the nature of the justification.* It is a forensic term, as you know, and is employed in the Scripture in a legal sense. I wonder if I can make this plain by an illustration: Here is a person who stands before the bar of justice; and, as I understand things, there is only one way in which that man can be justified. He must be found not guilty. And if he is found not guilty, then he is justified; that is, he is proved to be just. If the man is found guilty, we have no legal machinery by which he can ever be justified. He may be pardoned by the governor; but he cannot be justified. And he is as real a criminal after he is pardoned as he was before. There is only one way known among us by which a man can be justified, and that is by establishing his innocence. But here is the wonder of wonders, that men are all proved guilty under the law, and yet they are justified. That's what I am preaching now.

Let me suppose an impossible case. Here is a man who has had a fair trial, and he has been sentenced to death. He is guilty, and cannot be justified, because he is guilty. But now suppose for a moment a thing that could not happen among men, that a second person could be introduced who could actually take that first

man's guilt upon him; could change places with that man, and by some mysterious process, which of course is impossible, could become that man in a very real sense; take that man's character upon himself, and put his character and his merit upon that man. Then you see not only how that second man could be accepted for the first, but how he must be accepted. And that is what has actually taken place in the matter of redemption.

Justification does not change one's nature; it simply changes his standing. It doesn't work any inward change. It is an act of God, external to the person involved. It is simply declarative; it asserts that a man is no longer exposed to the penalties of an offended law. It is a judicial pronouncement, an outward declaration that the man is just; that he is acquitted; that he is discharged from obligation to the law; that he shall not come under its condemnation, but has passed from death unto life.

And remember that this is no fiction. God could not declare a man just unless he were just. That is, he could not justify man contrary to fact. There must be a real sense in which he is just. The law must have been satisfied, and the penalty must have been paid. And all this took place in the person of Christ. The law manifests the righteousness of God, and the demands of the Lord are inexorable. They cannot be waived; and they cannot be modified. So they were all met in the person of Jesus.

III. What, then, are *the results of justification?* Well, in the first place, the remission of penalty. That is, we are acquitted, and this acquittal, in so far as it is the act of God as a judge, may be denominated pardon; and in so far as it is the act of God as a Father, it may be denominated forgiveness. Don't you see the difference? Pardon has reference to a violated law, as in a governor's pardon; but forgiveness has reference to a violated love; and parents forgive. And both of these things meet in God who is a sovereign, and all the laws of right and wrong inhere in him, and when they are violated, he alone can pardon. But he also is a father, and in him the fountains of love take their rise; and when these have been vitiated, he alone can forgive.

But justification is more than the remission of penalty; more than acquittal, or forgiveness, or pardon. If this were all, then it would leave us in the condition of a wrong-doer discharged from prison. He goes forth with a stigma upon his name, and his past conduct follows him like a shadow of disgrace. He has difficulty in procuring employment; he cannot vote; and the difficulties he encounters take the heart out of him, and he often returns to his crime; and then his former conviction is brought forth as convincing proof of an inherently vicious character. And his last state is worse than his first.

But in justification there are special helps bestowed upon the man who has sinned. That's the meaning

of the gift of the Spirit. He is a special gift bestowed upon those who have been justified of all they have done in the past. It is he who makes the gospel the power of God unto salvation. It is said that Mr. Edwin M. Stanton one time rode roughshod over Abraham Lincoln, in a case at law in which they were joint counsel. And Stanton had become vindictive, and even violent. Then Lincoln was elected President. And Lincoln overlooked all this, and invited Stanton to become Secretary of War in his Cabinet, and he sent the invitation by a man named Harding, who knew all the former trouble. And when Stanton heard this, the tears came to his eyes, and he said to Mr. Harding: "Do you tell me that Mr. Lincoln sent this message to me? Then you tell him that such magnanimity will make me work with him as a man never served before." And that's how God treats men. He doesn't overlook his wrong-doing, but he covers it with a divine magnanimity. And not only so, but he restores one to favor, and gives him an inspiration to service. That's what is involved in justification.

But it is not enough for God to provide justification. It must also be accepted. It isn't enough for the Governor to parole from the prison. The man thus paroled must walk out; and he does so by believing the thing that is spoken. And that is how it is in justification. It is simply believing; as Paul said, that day, "We conclude that a man is justified by faith without works of the law." That is, he simply accepts

it. I do not say he understands it; and that's where half our mistakes are made. We think that the truths of the Scripture are to be received as any other truths are received—by understanding them. But they are not. I know that the historical facts of the Scripture can be received like any other historical facts; but these are largely incidental. The heart of the Scripture is truth revealed, and this has to be believed, just accepted, even though it cannot be understood. And that is how it becomes operative. No man in the world would ever, unaided, have conceived of the mystery of redemption; and no man on this side of eternity can understand it. But every man can accept it, and that is how it is meant to be had. No man living could ever have suspected the facts of justification, of which I have spoken. It was the puzzle of Job, and the puzzle of the ages. How can a man be just before God? And eventually Paul answered back. But he said he received these things from the Lord.

Justification is just freely accepted. There is nothing that can be paid for it; and no influence that can be brought to bear that can procure it; nothing that can be done. If I should proclaim in this place that justification could be had by the payment of a certain large sum, then every man would try to muster enough to procure it. If I should say, as is sometimes said, that justification could be had by painful penance, then people would enlarge their penances as Luther did until a voice seemed to shout in his ears, "The

just shall live by faith." If I should preach that justification could be had by long pilgrimages, then you would all start off tomorrow. But it is not. It is just simply accepted, even as you sit in this place. It is said that old Rowland Hill was one time preaching at an English fair, and he noticed the shopmen selling their wares at auction; and he said: "I am going to have an auction, too. I am going to sell wine and milk without money and without price. My friends over there," said he, "seem to have difficulty in getting men up to their prices, and my difficulty is in bringing you down to my prices." And so it ever has been with men.

And so I have done. I wonder if I have made this truth plain. If so, it is more than I intended; for if I make it plain, I shall fail. It is not meant to be understood; it is meant to be believed. A man doesn't understand the love of his friend; he simply enjoys it. A child doesn't understand the love of his parents; he simply takes it for granted. And a man doesn't understand the grace that is revealed in Christ; he just accepts it. That is what this passage means.

Job says, "How can a man be just before God?" It is an ancient question, as old as the first transgression. And Paul answers back, "We conclude that man is justified by faith." And Job says, "Are there no works required to commend us?" And Paul says: "No. A man doesn't produce good works in order to be justified; but he afterward produces good works

because he is justified." His good works are not the roots of a Christian experience, they are its fruits.

Then tell me, will you accept it? And how am I to know that you do accept it but by some expression you can make? O my people! If you accept it as one would enter a door that leads from bondage to freedom, then let's all enter in; and entering in through that door, just reckon ourselves Christians, and then live like Christians. That is the very heart of the gospel. Let's have it.

XII

THAT TRANSCENDENT EVENT

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; that he was buried, and that he arose again on the third day, according to the Scriptures.

—1 Corinthians 15: 3, 4.

THAT TRANSCENDENT EVENT

THERE is just one theme that is fitting for a day like this, and that is the resurrection of Jesus. There are preachers who evade this topic and speak on "The Persistence of Personality," or, "The Continuity of Life," or, "The Immortal Hope," or "The Open Door to Immortality," or of "Jesus' Survival of the Experience of Death," or, "The Living Christ." They turn aside from his actual resurrection, which is the one fitting theme for the Easter observance. That is what the Scriptures affirm. That is what the apostles regarded as of central importance. So I speak from the position of Paul.

Two things, then, are before us: The death of Jesus and his resurrection. They belong together like the two sides of my hand. One cannot think of them as separate, and for that reason they are almost always spoken of side by side in the Bible. The natural man does not like either. He does not like to think that Christ died for our sins. And some preachers actually deny it. It has been denied from the pulpit in this city; and some have actually denied that he died at all. They propose the swoon theory first mentioned by Strauss; that Jesus only swooned on the cross, and that the odor of the embalming, and the cool of the tomb soon brought him out of this swoon, and he escaped. So it

is well to think of the death of Jesus. It took place in public, where every one could observe. It occurred at the hands of professional executioners. It was admitted by his friends, although they could have wished otherwise; and was made sure by his enemies, who stood by with their taunts as long as he lived, and went away triumphant in the conviction that at last he was dead. And finally, when Pilate sent soldiers to break the legs of the victims and hasten their death, those soldiers actually broke the legs of the two who were crucified with Jesus; but when they came to Jesus, they found he was dead already, and they broke not his legs. But one of the soldiers thrust a spear into his side, and from out this wound there poured blood and water. We are called upon, sometimes, to afford death certificates; but the completest death certificate ever furnished to man was furnished in the instance of Jesus. So there was no question as to the death of our Lord.

He was taken down from the cross, wrapped in the rude garments of one who had been officially executed, and laid at rest in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. A huge stone was rolled against the entrance to the tomb; this tomb, sealed with a Roman seal, and, finally, a guard of soldiers stationed to watch the tomb until the Passover should be ended, and the friends of Jesus dispersed. And so there is no doubt that Jesus died and was buried; and all this according to the Scriptures.

Now we come to the Easter message: That he rose again on the third day, according to the Scriptures. That is the most transcendent event which ever occurred in the earth.

There are those who deny that Jesus rose from the dead; and it is a good thing for us to think on this subject once more. In the first place, the resurrection of Jesus is not a subject for denial. It may be questioned and doubted and explained away, but it is not a subject for denial, unless his grave can be located and his body exhumed. That might have been attempted in the New Testament period, but it was omitted, and now of course it is out of the question. The only recourse is to explanations, and of these, three have been offered: The swoon theory of Strauss, to which I have already referred. But no one believes that theory now, and it is a serious question whether it ever was believed. The second is the theft theory that sprang up on the first Easter Day, when the tomb was found empty and the soldiers were suborned to say that his disciples came and stole away the body while they slept. The idea was proposed by the high priests, notwithstanding the fact that Roman soldiers did not sleep at their posts; that, even if one should doze for a moment, not all of them slept at the self-same time; and that, even if they did, they would not be considered competent witnesses as to what had taken place while they slept. The folly of this is recorded in the Scripture itself. The third explana-

tion is the hallucination theory proposed by Renan; that the disciples were in a highly nervous and expectant frame of mind; that Mary Magdalene was especially so; that, coming early to the tomb in the gray of the sunrise, she saw the light shimmering through the trees and thought it was a vision of Jesus; that she ran in a hysterical mood and told the disciples she had seen the Lord—that he was risen from the dead; and that this originated the idea of his resurrection which has prevailed to this day. Did any one ever hear a more preposterous explanation than that? Mary went to the tomb to weep. The disciples were most unbelieving, and had to be convinced by infallible proofs. Instead of expecting a resurrection, they were all of them disbelieving, but even they became as assured of the resurrection of Jesus as they were of his death. And from that moment their gospel consisted of "Jesus and the resurrection."

Mary did not at first recognize Jesus. She thought he was the gardener until he spoke; and she recognized him by his voice. Which reminds me of a letter I received a short time ago, after a broadcasting service, when a man who once lived in this city was listening to me, a thousand miles away; and, although he did not hear the announcer, he heard me. He called his wife and said: "Come, listen! Who is that?" And she said, "That is Mr. Morse of Denver. I know him by the way he says 'Jesus.'" And Mary knew Jesus by the way he said, "Mary!"

In the chapter from which my text is taken, the apostle gives a summary of another line of evidence. He says that the Risen Christ was first seen by Cephas and then by the Twelve. After that he was seen of above five hundred at once, of whom the greater part were living when he wrote. After that, he was seen of James, then of all the apostles, and, last of all, he was seen by him, that is, by Paul. That is, the apostle listed the names of witnesses who could have been summoned and questioned. I know it is too late now, but it was perfectly possible then. And it passed.

But there is another kind of evidence; and I speak of this with some measure of diffidence, for I know I am speaking to people who know more about it than I. In courts of law, I am told that evidence is of two sorts: Direct and presumptive, and limited to the things which are under investigation. But presumptive evidence, I am told, tries to conceive the situation as a whole, in order to determine whether an alleged event would be likely to occur. Is the event in question probable in the light of the whole situation? Were the currents of things moving in the direction of such an event? Now, apply this to the problem before us. Take into account not only the direct evidence as to the resurrection, but as to the life and character and self-consciousness and work of the person who died and who was alleged to have risen, and see how convincing it is. Was there anything remarkable about this man? Was he out of the ordinary? And was there

anything remarkable about the men who said he was raised from the dead? When Jesus was put to death, his disciples were simply a group of broken, defeated, and dispirited men; and in a few days they were animated by faith and hope and courage; and certainly they startled the world. They were changed, and they affirmed it was the risen Christ who had changed them. That is presumptive evidence. Upon it the church stands; and in some ways it is the strongest proof that we have. There is no explanation of the death of Jesus apart from the fact of his resurrection. That is what the apostle says: "If Christ be not raised, then is our faith vain, and we are yet in our sins." "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

Jesus is risen. That is the message of Easter. But what does that mean to us? Well, in the first place, the resurrection of Jesus is the crowning proof of his deity, and of his central place in the work of redemption. That is what Paul says: That "he was declared to be the son of God with power." But how? Not by his birth, though his birth was out of the ordinary; not by an audible voice, although that is reported to have been given on several occasions; not by the whispered voice of the Spirit in the hearts of men, though that witness is felt to be given to Christian people—but "by his resurrection from the dead." [1] That was God's answer to the question of the deity of Christ,

[1] Romans 1: 4.

and from that there is no appeal. That is the point of Peter's argument on the day of Pentecost, when he addressed the multitude. Do you believe, says Peter, that Jesus was the Son of God? You took him with wicked hands and put him to death, but God raised him up because it was not possible for him to be holden of death; and hath given him all power in heaven and earth.

Again, the resurrection of Jesus is the witness to the living Christ in the world today. He is alive. He is in this city. He is in this place. That is the very crux of our religion. There are three deities whom the soul fears. The first is an absent deity who is outside the world and cannot get in; the second is a heedless deity who may be in the world but does not care; and the third is a deity who is dead. It is he of whom Matthew Arnold speaks when he says:

> Far hence he lies in some lone Syrian town;
> And o'er his grave with shining eyes,
> The Syrian stars look down.

But that is not the Christ of whom I am speaking. I speak of the Christ who is living; the Christ of whom Doctor Dale loved to preach in Birmingham, England. He was writing an Easter sermon; and when half-way through, the thought of the risen Lord broke in upon him as never before. "Christ is alive," he said, "alive—living, as really as I am." At first it seemed strange and hardly true, but at last it came upon him as a burst of glory—"Yes, Jesus is LIVING!" It

was to Doctor Dale as a new discovery, and he felt he must carry this as never before to his people. And from that time on there began a custom, which continued in his church, of singing an Easter hymn every Sunday morning to commemorate the resurrection of Jesus.

Again, the resurrection of Jesus is the pattern of the new life we have in Christ. That is the meaning of that ordinance which you witnessed this morning. "As many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death. Therefore are we buried with him in baptism unto death. That, like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, even so should we walk in the newness of life."[2] This is the kind of life we should live, and we can live it because he lives to enable us. His risen life was a miracle; so is our life in him. That is what the apostle meant when he prayed that the Ephesians "might know the exceeding greatness of God's power according to the working of the strength of his might which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead."[3] You can almost see God bending, as it were, over Jesus in his mighty effort to raise him. So he bent over us to make us Christians.

And finally, the resurrection of Jesus is the pledge of our own resurrection and promise of immortal glory in him. That is what the apostle says, "If the spirit of him that raised up Christ from the dead dwell

[2] Romans 6: 4. [3] Ephesians 1: 19, 20.

in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead will also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you." [4]

I love the Easter Day, for it permits us to think of the risen Christ, and of the hope of glory, and of the promise in store for the blessed dead. How many there are of the latter. How many have I seen march out of the city in my years of ministry here. I have stood with almost every family in my church amid the mingled lights and shadows of their sorrows, and in some families more than once. Is there any message for these? Of course there is—a message of unquestioned hope; and this I would share with all.

Alas, for him who never sees
The stars shine through his cypress trees;
Who, hopeless, lays his dead away,
Nor looks to see the breaking day
Across his mournful marbles play;
Who has not learned in hours of faith
That truth to flesh and sense unknown;
That life is ever lord of death,
And love can never lose its own.

Look up, therefore, and shout aloud. We live in a living world. The predominant thing is life; and all that because the Lord of life is alive.

That is the message of Easter, and the resurrection of Jesus is the most assured and the most transcendent event that ever occurred in the earth.

[4] Romans 8: 11.

XIII

MAINTAINING THE EASTER LEVEL

If ye, then, were raised together with Christ, seek those things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

—*Colossians 3: 1.*

MAINTAINING THE EASTER LEVEL

THE resurrection of Jesus is represented under three aspects in the Scriptures. It is pointed to as a proof of his deity. That is what Paul meant when he wrote to the Romans concerning "his son Jesus Christ, our Lord, who was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh, and declared to be the son of God, with power according to the spirit of holiness, by his resurrection from the dead."[1] That is, the resurrection of Jesus establishes his deity. Again, the resurrection of Jesus is used as a type and promise of our resurrection: "Because he lives, we also shall live." "Now is Christ risen and become the first-fruits of them that slept."[2] And, thirdly, the resurrection of Jesus is pointed to as the symbol of the Christian's life, his inspiration for holy living. That is what is said in the Scripture before us. The fact of the resurrection is granted. The bonds of death have been broken. Our Lord has risen to the glory which he had with the Father before the worlds were made, and has bestowed upon people his type of life. This being so, they ought to seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated upon the right hand of God.

I shall not argue, therefore, for the resurrection of Jesus—that such a thing is possible. To my mind, the

[1] Romans 1: 3. [2] 1 Corinthians 15: 20.

problem is not the continuance of life, but its beginning; not that we shall live, but that we do live. Granted that God is able to call men into being and build for them the present tabernacle of clay, then who can doubt that we may also be clothed upon with immortality, and that death shall be swallowed up with life? I take it for granted that Christ rose from the dead, and I take it for granted that his resurrection carries with it ours in the course of things. What I want to consider is the influence his resurrection in the past and our resurrection in the future ought to have upon our lives in the present. That is what the apostle has in mind: That there is some sort of connection between the resurrection of Jesus and present noble living.

The resurrection of Jesus took place centuries ago, but it exercises a most potent influence upon us today. It is not only an event in the past, but it is also a powerful force in the present—a force as real as gravitation, or heat, or light, or any other of the great hidden powers which men utilize every day.

The life of man is but one life. The solidarity of the race is not fiction. It is not a mere platitude which asserts that we were actually represented in the first man who is said to have dwelt in the Garden of Eden, or that we shall reappear in the last man of the race. It is this common human life that lies at the basis of all sympathy and philanthropy and of the service which one person renders another. We can only be

kind to each other because we are kinned to each other, and because the Lord hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth.

Jesus came into this life. He was more distinctly human than any other man of the race. He was the archetypal man, or, as he liked to speak of himself, he was the "Son of man," and all the suffering and humiliation and sin of the race were his just as truly as they are mine. And the converse also is true; that all his virtue and holiness and triumph are the inheritance of the race because he was bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. And he cannot be exalted to the right hand of God without most powerfully influencing the race with which he has become united. I think I can illustrate this: Here is the atmosphere about us. Each moment we are drinking in the air. But what air? Only that which is nearest the earth? By no means. We are breathing the air from the top just as truly as the air round about us. Each draught of air into my lungs moves the whole volume of air around the earth, and this, because the air is all one. Some of it may be foul, some cold, and some may be intensely hot; but it is all one, just the same. And a change in one place affects the whole volume. We see this illustrated in storms. So the life of the race is all one, and what happens to one person affects every other person. And an event so transcendent as the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus cannot take place without influencing every soul of man in the race.

The exaltation of Jesus is an enormous power. I think I can illustrate this: In the Dominion of Canada, they sometimes throw a person into prison for debt, and I think they do this also in this country. It is a foolish thing to do, for when a man is so shut up, there is nothing to which he can turn his hand in order to meet his obligation. It is a picture of man shut up to his sin. He is helpless. He cannot even "work it out." Well, here is a man in prison. But his father is hunting gold in the Klondike, and he also is poor. But one day this father comes upon a glittering nugget, and from his poverty he immediately rises to be a man of wealth; and he telegraphs to the legal authorities that he has deposited the sum of his son's indebtedness in a bank on the distant coast, and the result is that the nation's law gives way, and the man is released from prison. The father did not create that nugget of gold. It had been there through all the years since time began. But it simply changed relations, and in doing so, it banished the finder's penury and affected a prisoner's standing before the law. It exerted a power; and this, simply because the son was in the father; and when the father's condition changed, the son's condition changed, also. You see the figure. We were in Christ, and when he was exalted, we were exalted. That is what the apostle means. "If ye, then, were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God." Here is a family, for instance, where the strug-

gle is for bread to eat and raiment to wear. The father toils from year to year, and at night he can scarcely drag his weary frame to his home. His family shares his privation, and the community is influenced by his condition, so that the grocer will not sell him anything until he sees the color of his money. But one day the man is discovered to be the heir to a fortune in another land. The property itself does not change; and the man and his family do not change; but there is a change somewhere. This family becomes joyous, the father light-hearted, and the neighbors begin to vie with each other in their patronage; and all this in view of a changed relation to a distant fortune. Is it any wonder, therefore, that the resurrection of Jesus transforms the life of the Christian? The wonder is not that we are influenced, that we are raised with him. The wonder is that we are united to him in faith and love and kinship and likeness. Granting the union of the believer with Christ by faith, and all else follows as naturally as the life itself. Our union with him as head of a new creation, or a new humanity, makes us partakers of his resurrection, as our victory over death. He is exalted; so are we. The water in the reservoir and in the fountain rise to precisely the same height. The sunbeam in the chamber is precisely the same as the sunbeam in the sky. Here is a family in which the father is seized with some deadly sickness, and the whole house is affected. In his home the light is veiled from the windows, the voice is

hushed to a whisper, and the step of the nurse is as gentle as a sunbeam, and the sorrow in that home is almost as real as if the last enemy had entered. But one day the sickness takes a turn for the better, and the doctor says that the danger is past. Then note the change in that home. The joy is as pronounced as the grief was oppressive. The family were sick with the father, but now they are raised with him. They were united to him in a common life and a common love, and his ups and downs, his sorrows and joys are theirs. So are we united with Christ. We died with him, and with him we are also raised and exalted.

Try to measure the effect of Livingstone's first visit to Africa. That great continent was groping in the night of ignorance and superstition and vice, when suddenly a stranger appeared among them. He told them there was another world. He told them of its habits and customs and of the forces his countrymen used; and Africa that day was changed, simply because one great heart had touched that continent. What I am saying is this: That the heart of this world is above; that it has touched us in the person of Jesus, and that all his hopes and powers, his promises and triumphs are ours. Grant that Livingstone touched Africa, and all the changes since that day are accounted for. Grant the incarnation of God, that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us—and all the rest is bound to follow. A new life is in this world, and we are raised with Christ.

At Mount Vernon in Virginia was the home of George Washington, and there his tomb is to be seen. It is visited by thousands who love his name. Near his tomb was once stationed an old black man—a kind of relic of the family. He was then a free man, but he had once been a slave. And when asked how he got his freedom, he used to say that "When we surrendered, we got freedom." That chain about him fell to the ground. Somebody touched it. It fell because of a change, an event, taking place in a distant part of the Union. That event was potent to knock the chains from three million slaves. The gold was potent to release the prisoner. Both were effected by simply publishing a word. Christ's word is his power. It is this which we publish today, and because he lives, we also live.

If the resurrection of Jesus is a power in the life of the Christian, what follows? Why, "Seek those things which are above." But what are these things? Well, there is an upper and a lower side to everything. The circumstances of our lives are all right in themselves. They are meant to be a blessing, and if we are on the upper side of them, they prove to be so; but if we are on the lower side, they engender gloom and occasion defeat. This is true of our talents, and it is true of our successes, of our education, of our adversities, and of everything which transpires. If ye, then, be risen of Christ, seek those things which are above. The things above are the things which Christ wants;

and if we have the spirit of Christ, that spirit will suggest the things we should seek. That is what Jesus meant when he promised his holy spirit to lead us. Let me illustrate: The rich resources of this country have turned to our shores millions of foreigners, English and German and French and Russian and Italian, and others. They do not immediately change their allegiance when they arrive in this country, but their sympathies for a time are still English or German or Italian, as the case may be; and just so far they seek those things that are suggested by the countries from which they came. If they are English, they say, "Let us seek the things that are English." Their sympathies determine their haunts, their associations, and their employments. They act according to their nature, and only after an interval do they seek the things which belong to this country. Here is a bride, just come into her new home. The father's home in which she had formerly lived is no less dear, and her love for her parents is no less sincere, but when she steps over the threshold of her new home, from that moment she seeks the things that make for that home. There will center her strongest desires; by which I mean that if we are risen with Christ, then we shall seek the things that he loves. This will maintain the Easter level.

XIV

HEAVEN AS A HOME

In my Father's house, are many mansions.

—John 14: 2.

HEAVEN AS A HOME

THERE are people in foreign countries who have an absorbing interest in this country. They have relatives or friends living here, or they have money invested in our rich resources, or they are planning to come here themselves, some time. There are others in foreign countries who never think of this country at all. They have no interest here. So there are people who have an absorbing interest in heaven. They feel they have friends in that land, or treasures laid up in that region, or they hope to go there themselves some day. And to these I am speaking this morning.

The word "heaven" appears often in the Bible, and is used in three distinct senses. The first is the atmospheric heaven, which is simply the place of the clouds and the home of the birds. It is in plain sight and but a little beyond our reach. That is not the heaven of which I am speaking today. The second is the astronomical heaven—the region in which the sun, the moon, and the stars appear. That is enormously vast and incalculably distant, and it declares the glory of God. But that is not the heaven of which I am speaking. The third is the theological heaven, which the Bible represents as the abode of God and of the angels and of good people who die. That is entirely out of our sight, and can only be known by revelation.

That is the heaven of which I am speaking. It is the heaven of which Jesus spoke; the heaven from which he came and to which he returned; the heaven which Jacob saw; into which Stephen looked, and into which Paul said he was caught up in the spirit and saw things of which he was not permitted to speak; the heaven into which our loved ones have gone. No one knows just where it is. It may be not far away, but it is entirely invisible; and Jesus called it the "Father's House." That gives me my topic this morning. I speak of this heaven as a "home."

The idea of such a place is a primary idea. It is like the ideas of space and time; a part of the furniture of the soul. And we know this because it appears in all lands and in all nations and among all peoples. Every one believes there must be such a place, and all the great world teachers have taught it. But of all of those who have spoken of heaven, none of them, at any time or any place, can be compared with Jesus; and even he does not argue for its existence. He simply took it for granted as he did the existence of God. He found his generation believing in heaven, and he simply expanded that belief and confirmed it. He said: "In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you." So we can believe in the fact of heaven from the teachings of Jesus.

We are warranted in believing that as a place it must be preeminently beautiful. We are acquainted with

one world of God's making, and that is a beautiful world. Everything about it is beautiful. There is conduct in the world that is not beautiful, but conduct is of the manner of men. I have lived in the world a considerable time; have traveled on two continents; have seen the storm and stress of things, but I cannot think of a single thing in nature that I have ever seen that is not a thing of beauty.

> For oh, but the world is fair, is fair,
> And oh, but the world is sweet;
> And out in the gold of the blossoming mold,
> We can sit at the Master's feet.

And if this beginning of worlds is so inherently beautiful, I wonder what other worlds must be. When I consider the boundless resources of God, and consider his taste for the beautiful and his wealth of wisdom as displayed in this world, I know that the last great world must be both magnificent and infinitely beautiful. In the ancient city of Ephesus was the temple of Diana, whose furnishings were so dazzling and brilliant that when the keeper opened its doors to strangers, he warned them to take heed to their eyes. And so I feel in respect of heaven, that our faculties must be greatly enlarged and strengthened before we can look with safety upon the matchless splendor of heaven. That is the city of the King of the universe. It is the home of the redeemed, the land of eternal days; not one tear of human sorrow to embitter it; where "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow

nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." Oh, what it must be to be there!

And this home is not only beautiful, it is also enormously vast. It is a place of "many mansions," said Jesus. And you will never get a right idea of heaven until you look into that word "mansion." It is a word which occurs in a number of places in the Bible. As a noun, it occurs only twice, but as a verb it occurs many times, and as such, it always connotes a lodging-place; as when Jesus lodged with Zaccheus, or when Peter lodged with Simon the tanner, or when Paul lodged with Aquila and Priscilla. So far as this word gives us light, it indicates progress. We shall dwell in heaven, but we shall be constantly moving on. We shall grow in soul, but move on in the capacity of mutual helpfulness. There will be no sin and, therefore, no repentance; but there will be eternal growth in goodness.

And there will be many people there. They shall come from the East and the West, and the North and the South; and until the number of the fallen leaves of all the ages has been counted; and the sand-dust of all the oceans' beaches, and the drops of all the floods, you can never know how great will be the throng of those who will have escaped from the thralldom of sin and who will have been made welcome in the mansions of God. The present population of heaven is only a handful compared with those who will be there, when God hath made the whole complete. China is yet to

be saved, and Africa and India and Europe and America, and all the islands of the sea; and after that there may be other worlds. I do not know but that every glittering star is the center of a system of worlds like ours, and that from all those spheres the hosts will come. There will be no gate to keep them out, and no one will want to keep them out; and it may be that the millions from this earth will be only a colony compared with the great influx from the created universe.

Jesus was a wonderful teacher, and he put the deep things of the spiritual world in terms of our common life, and here he declares that heaven is a home. When my brother speaks to me of my "father's house," I understand it to mean my home and our home; and when Jesus speaks of "My Father's House," we are justified in thinking that he is speaking of heaven as a home. And what a wonderful word is *home!* Into it have been gathered our most sacred memories, our tenderest associations and our brightest hopes. It matters not whether the home of our childhood has been a cottage on the hillside or a house in some city, to it goes back the heart from distant places; and as the years go by, we see that home through a golden mist, where all things are unspeakably beautiful. All our best friends are there. We make friends along the highway of life, but the home friends are the sweetest of all; and when all the world is cold and repellent, there is always a refuge at home.

One's home is heaven because those whom we love

are there. I read one time of a mother who was on her last bed of sickness, and her little girl was taken from her to the home of a neighbor, but the child called often for the mother; and one day the mother died, and they thought they would bury her without saying a word to the child. It would do neither mother nor daughter any good. And thus the mother was buried; after which the child was taken back to her mother's home, and the first thing she did was to go to her mother's living-room and then to her mother's bedroom; and she went all over the house, calling "Mother!" And when she found her not, she went to the neighbor and said: "Take me back. I don't want to stay here if I cannot see mother." It was the presence of mother that made the place home. And so will it be in heaven. I am sometimes asked if I think we shall know each other in heaven; and I say, "Of course we shall, for does not the Scripture say we shall be satisfied?" That is all I want to know, for the heart that has learned to love here will never be satisfied unless we shall know each other there.

I think I know why heaven is veiled from us in the present; it is in the nature of things. We are all children of faith, and everything in the future is veiled. And that is well, but especially so in respect of heaven, for a full view of heaven would unfit us for this kind of world. A story is told of a crew returning to their native country of France after years of absence overseas. As the men approached the shore of their

native land, they were so eager to get a glimpse of its beloved landscape that some of them mounted the rigging, and some clung to the spars, while others adjusted their glasses and strained their eyes from the deck. Suddenly one of them shouted, "There it is!" And all eyes were turned in the direction pointed, and when they began to discern the tops of the hills, the towns and then the houses, they could not contain themselves for joy. They dressed in their best; seized the presents they had brought for their friends; and as the ship drew in, they flung themselves from the ship to the shore, and the vessel had to be brought to its moorings by others. That is how it would be if we could see the glories of heaven today. It would be too great for our mortal frame to bear, and it would unnerve us for the steady task of the present. I have read somewhere that when the invalid soldiers of the Crimean War were brought aboard their troopships, the bands on the shore played, "Home, Sweet Home;" and as the wounded soldiers heard the familiar strains, strong men who had faced the fury of battle broke down and wept, when they remembered their comrades of the Crimean War for whom there was no return to their homes, and when they thought of the possibility that some of them even might die on the trip and be buried in the deep and never reach their homes. But to us there is no such cause for alarm, for all who fight in this great fight are sure to get home; and when the roll is called up yonder, we'll be there.

Oh, that home of the soul! In my visions and dreams,
Its bright jasper walls I can see;
'Till I fancy but dimly the veil intervenes
Between that fair city and me.

That unchangeable home is for you and for me,
Where Jesus of Nazareth stands.
The king of all kingdoms forever is he,
And he holdeth the crowns in his hands.

You remember the time, far back in the past, when in the falling twilight your mother used to stand in the old home doorway and call you to come in for the night? Well, it may be twilight for some who are listening to me, and God may be calling some of you to come to the eternal home; to come in, not for the night (for there will be no night there), but to come in for eternal day. My father died when I was but a lad; but I remember walking with him in the fields, until my little feet became so weary that I thought I should never get home. But he cheered me up by saying, "Come on, my little lad, we are getting nearly home." So I think of some people in my congregation. They walk with a limp. They are nearly home; and it is the Father who cheers them on; and they will make it.

I heard a man speak who had traveled in Palestine. It was before the days of the automobile, and they traveled by caravan of camels and horses and mules; and he told how the camp was struck in the morning and how it was always ready for them at night. Each morning at five, the sentinels of the camp blew on

trumpets for the people to rise, and in thirty minutes the canvas of the tents fell down; and if any had lingered, it was useless for them. By the time they were seated for breakfast, they beheld their tents, bag and baggage, being loaded on camels and mules and being borne away, they knew not where; and neither did they see them again during all the day, for they often proceeded by another route. But late in the afternoon as the sun was setting, and they rounded a turn in the road or came to the top of some hill, they saw their tents all set up for them for the night, and inside them, the beds and the basins and baggage, in order. Well, that is how it is with us, and that is precisely what Paul said: "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved or stricken down, we have a building of God—a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." That is what Jesus said: "In my father's house are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." He is simply in advance, setting up the tents for his people.

I read a story yesterday. An eminent clergyman in the East was riding, one day, from New York to Chicago. He was in a Pullman car, and with him, among others, were a mother and her little girl of five. This little girl and the preacher soon became friends, and they talked much together on the trip. That little girl had games with her, and they played together; and the preacher found that this little girl

and her mother were going to South Bend, Indiana, to join the husband and father who had recently secured a position there. And when they reached Elkhart, the preacher said: "It is just one hundred and one miles from here to Chicago. We shall make that in two hours and twenty minutes, and South Bend comes before Chicago." The little girl said, "I don't care if this old train never gets to South Bend;" and when the preacher expressed his surprise and asked why she held South Bend in such low esteem, she said it was because she would have to learn some very hard letters there. It seemed she had just started school in New York. She had had a hard time, too, with her letters, and when word came that they were to move, she had heard her mother say she was sorry to go, for her child had just started in school in New York, and now she would have to begin all over again. The child got the impression that in South Bend she would encounter a new sort of alphabet, and she dreaded the hard letters. The preacher told the little girl he had been through South Bend on numberless occasions, and he knew they used the same alphabet there that they did in New York; that conditions there were like they were in New York. The child became interested, and when the train pulled into South Bend, he saw her leap into the arms of her father.

So it is in respect of heaven. We do not have to learn a new alphabet there.

XV

SELF-DECEPTION

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

—1 John 1:8, 9.

SELF-DECEPTION

THE object of education is to rid the world of ignorance. The object of medicine is to rid the world of disease. The object of socialism, in its better forms, is to rid the world of poverty. And the object of Christianity is to rid the world of sin.

The plague of the world is sin. If this could be abolished, then everything would be perfect. This is what Christianity proposes, and, so far as I know, Christianity is the only religion in all the world that has ever proposed to abolish sin. In this it stands in contrast with all other religions. The idea of sin is to be found in all the ethnic religions, but they do not know what to do with it. They cannot endure it. They cannot wear it out. They cannot escape it except by escaping life. So the prayer of the Buddhist, for instance, is to "deliver us from existence." The prayer of the Christian is to "deliver us from sin, and give us eternal existence."

There are those who say there is no sin. The name of Henry D. Thoreau is well known in the world of letters. One day a friend said to Mr. Thoreau, "Have you made your peace with God?" And Mr. Thoreau quietly replied, "I have never had any quarrel with God." That is the way some people talk; and it is no new thing. It is as old as the first Christian century.

There were those in John's day who said that they had no sin; and to this John replied, "If we say we have so sin, we deceive ourselves."

Now, deception is a very old practise, and deception is everywhere. It is found in nature and is found among men. Deception in nature we call mimicry; while deception among men we call sin. I can understand how people may attempt to deceive each other, but I cannot understand how a man will deliberately attempt to deceive himself; and yet that is what John says that we do when we deny that we have any sin. We are simply "kidding" ourselves. I want, therefore, to show some of the ways in which we deceive ourselves in respect of sin.

First, We balance our sins against certain pseudo-virtues. We all of us maintain a system of book-keeping, with debits and credits. For instance, some of us attend church occasionally; possibly attend prayer services; perhaps read our Bibles, and sometimes "say our prayers"; and because of this we think these will balance our well-known sins. It is an old practise of self-deception. It has always existed, and sometimes I despair it may always exist.

Now there is one truth which is fundamental to the Scriptures. It lies beneath everything else. It is this: That God is a righteous God and requires righteousness, and righteousness only, of his people. This has always been his demand, and because people do not like to give him righteousness, they give him substi-

tutes instead. It was the practise of the Jews. They knew that God required righteousness only of them, but, instead, they gave him fasts and feasts and ceremonies and rites, until the prophets cried aloud in the name of the Lord and said, "I hate your sacrifices." It was so with the Pharisee in the well-known parable of Jesus: "He went into the temple and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank thee that I am not as other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week. I give tithes of all that I possess.'" But I say unto him: "Mr. Pharisee, are you upright in your life?" And he says, "I fast twice in the week." I say, "Are you gentle with your family and kind to your children?" And he says, "I fast twice in the week." I say, "Did you overreach in that business dealing last week with your neighbor?" And he says, "I give tithes of all that I possess." It is an old, old trick.

Four hundred years ago, there lived a man named Martin Luther. And his soul was incensed because he saw how people were deceived in religion. They cast their coppers into the coffers and thought this would in some way make amends for their sins. We do the very same thing. A man desires to be greedy and selfish, and he thinks he can purchase this by the practice of certain pseudo-virtues. It is a matter of self-deception. A man is not a Christian because he goes to church, any more than he is an automobile because he goes to a garage! He is not a Christian because

he has certain tender emotions at times, any more than he is a patriot because he has George Washington's picture in his office. The thing which counts is not saying, but service; not praying, but practise; not creed, but deed; not what one thinks, but how he lives. So I say we deceive ourselves by balancing our sins against certain commendable virtues.

Second, We deceive ourselves by assuming virtues that are not our own. This is a very common method. Here is a man who prides himself in his family; but the main consideration is, What has he done to make his family name to be honored? Here is a man who prides himself upon being an American. He thanks God that he is not a Russian, nor a Turk, nor a German, nor even an Englishman—he is an American! But I inquire what he has done to make the American name to be honored? There are people in prison who are proud they are Americans! And there are simply thousands of people who violate all the best standards of good citizenship and still pride themselves that they are Americans. It is a matter of self-deception. So also in our churches. Some man prides himself he belongs to an active, generous, large, and noble church; but I ask him how much he has done to make the church to be active and noble and generous and large? A man is not generous because he belongs to a generous church; nor active because he belongs to an active church; nor spiritual because he belongs to a spiritual church.

Do you not see? People sometimes laugh at the theological doctrine of imputation—that Adam's sin, for instance, is imputed to all the race, and that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to those who put their trust in him. People say that doctrine is both impossible and preposterous; and yet they practise it themselves. They impute to themselves virtues which are not theirs, and omit vices which are necessarily theirs. Every one believes in the solidarity of the race in respect of virtues; but the same holds true in respect of vices. We read Anglo-Saxon history and think of the colonizing power Britain has been during all these years, and we say, "We, also, are Anglo-Saxons." But we fail to look at the trail of pillage and plunder and blood which is also written in English history. We pride ourselves in George Washington as being illustrative of the best American type; but we must remember that Benedict Arnold belonged to that same generation. And if we believe in the solidarity of the race in respect of Washington, we must believe in it also in respect of Arnold. So I say we deceive ourselves in assuming virtues which in no wise belong to us, and forget the vices which are just as truly entailed.

In the third place, we deceive ourselves by the very easy and common practise of looking at the sins of others and forgetting our own. Every one has read *Pilgrim's Progress,* and therefore every one will remember that Pilgrim carried his burden on his back,

which was a very convenient place. It was where he could not see it. This represents the blinding effect of sin. We can see other people's faults, but we seldom see our own. We should be greatly amazed sometimes if we could see what we are in contrast to that which is expected of us. It is easy to see the sins of others. The spendthrift, for instance, could read us a great homily upon the sins of the miser; and the miser could read us a sermon on the sins of the spendthrift. It is amazing how quick we are to see the mote in other people's eyes. And I beg you to remember that when I am speaking of this, I am preaching also to myself. This is the special temptation of preachers—to think because they are always talking about other people's sins, or because they are speaking upon virtuous things, that they themselves are virtuous. This does not necessarily follow. Nor is it hard to preach against other people's sins, and especially if it is done from the pulpit.

Fourth, Again we deceive ourselves by disguising our vices, for instance, by giving them some new name. Here is a man who lives a very covetous life and squeezes a dollar until it cries in its agony; and he calls it "thrift." Here is a man who spends money—not that which he has earned himself, but which he has inherited from others—he scatters it on every side with a lavish hand and calls it "generosity." It is simple self-deception. Some years ago, the public was entertained by what were called *The Ravel Plays in Pan-*

tomime. One scene took place in a gorgeous chamber, whose columns were of porphyry and marble and precious stones; whose floor was rich and beautiful; whose music was ravishing. The people drank and danced, in the richest of garments. Then suddenly, at the sound of a trumpet, all this was changed. Those beautiful columns became gravestones; the music became a wild and wicked shriek; the garments fell from the people, and the people appeared as ghosts or skeletons. Well, some day a trumpet will sound, and we shall appear just as we are; and our vices can no longer be disguised.

Fifth, Again, we deceive ourselves by changing the form of our sins. We think that sin consists in the form in which it appears, and by changing this form we think we have escaped the sin. Not so! We read the Sixth Commandment: "Thou shalt not kill." And we say, "Thank the Lord we are not killers!" while in our hearts we secretly wish that our enemy would be run over by an automobile or in some other way gotten out of our path. "Thou shalt not steal." And we say to ourselves, "Thank God, we are not thieves!" Nevertheless, we overreach in our bargaining and thus become possessed of things which do not belong to us, without giving an equivalent therefor. And as for the Seventh Commandment, of course we are not guilty of that! But in our hearts we wish there were circumstances in which this might be safely indulged. The world simply reeks in sin. And yet we deceive

ourselves in some such way as this. Mr. Moody tells us that he at one time visited a prison and spoke to the inmates, and afterward interviewed all of them personally, and that he never saw such a virtuous group of people anywhere in all the world. True, they were all in prison; but every one of them was there not for his own fault, but for the fault of somebody else! That is how they deceived themselves.

So we deceive ourselves in respect of sin, by balancing sins against virtues, by assuming virtues to which we have no title at all, by looking at the sins of others instead of our own, by disguising our vices or by changing their form.

Then in the sixth place, we deceive ourselves by saying that there really is no sin. That is the substance of the text. We say that evil is simply goodness in the making; like the greenness of the apple which will one day be ripe; like the follies of youth, which will one day be outgrown; and that if a man fall, he really falls upward; that God is good, and that some day he will bring good out of everything. That is how we deceive ourselves. But sin is not good in the making. The man who was held up in the filling-station will not consent that theft is honesty in the making. The man who loses his good name through slander will not say that slander is truth in the making. No one claims that diphtheria is health in the making; and no one thinks that the Canada thistle is Colorado wheat in the making, nor that Benedict Arnold was

George Washington in the making, nor that John Wilkes Booth was Abraham Lincoln in the making, nor that Judas Iscariot was Jesus in the making. No: sin is not good in the making, and sin is the same everywhere. It may not appear in the same form in all people, but the principle at the bottom of it is precisely the same in all; and there is not a single sin that is known to men of which I myself had not been capable, and which I might not have performed except for the exceeding grace of God.

Seventh, There is one other way in which we deceive ourselves in respect of sin; and that is in not thinking of it at all. We simply pass it by. I am reminded of what Renan wrote when he read Amiel's *Journal:* "M. Amiel asks what M. Renan makes of sin. Eh! bien! I think I leave it out!"

A wise business man takes a balance of his affairs every week. He calls in a physician to take a balance of his health every few months; but in respect of his religion he never strikes a balance at all. That is the complaint of the Lord: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but my people doth not consider." That is the way the Lord speaks in respect of his ancient people, and that is the way he thinks regarding us. The sailor takes his bearings every day to make sure where he is, but there are people in our churches who have not taken their moral and spiritual latitude and longitude for years, and they could not tell whether they are farther ahead today

than they were ten years ago. This is not only self-deception, it is self-neglect.

So I begin to conclude. Maybe you think this is the kind of sermon I like to preach, but in that case you do not know me. I should like always to preach soft things, if circumstances permitted it. But there is sin in the world, and I am sure it is not sufficiently spoken against in these days. Nevertheless, there is a good side to this text. The text naturally falls into two parts. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us"—that is one side of the text. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"—that is the other side.

But what does it mean to confess? It does not mean simply to acknowledge one's sin. Sometimes we see by the paper where a man has been arrested and charged with some fault and has "confessed" it. That is not confession; that is acknowledgment. He has simply acknowledged his sin. Confession is not simply admitting that a sin is bad, or even setting over against it the contrasting virtue; that is not confession. In confession, a man takes God's side in respect of his sin, and in doing so, he becomes detached from the sin itself. That is what the Scripture says: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins"—that is one thing. "And to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"—that is another thing. A man does not have consumption because he

coughs, but he coughs because he has consumption. A man is not a sinner because he sins, but he sins because he is a sinner. If he have consumption, his physician may treat his cough and, possibly, relieve him of it, but that does not cleanse him of consumption. "If we confess our sins," God treats us for them; he forgives them; he bears them from us as far as the East is from the West—that is one thing. Then, "he cleanses us from all unrighteousness"—that is another thing. And that being done, neither they nor any other sin can ever recur. That is the health of the soul, and that is the promise of the gospel.

XVI

MARANATHA

Maranatha!

—*1 Corinthians 16: 22.*

MARANATHA

THE language spoken by Jesus was neither Hebrew nor Greek. It was Aramaic. The Gospels and the Epistles were written originally in Greek, but occasionally an Aramaic word would creep in. Several of these words have been preserved in spite of numerous translations. For instance, when Jesus raised the little daughter of Jairus, he said, *Talitha cumi,* which, being interpreted, means, "Little girlie, I say unto thee, Arise!" And the very words that were spoken have been preserved in the Gospel. So also of the fourth word from the cross, when Jesus rallied from the three hours of darkness and cried out, saying, *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?* which, being interpreted means, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And the very words that he spoke are preserved. So also in one instance in the Epistles of Paul. It is found in the last verse of the first letter to the Corinthian church, where he signed his name and gave his benediction. In the very midst of it all he said, "Maranatha!" It is an Aramaic word, and has remained untranslated in all our revisions. This word seems to have a kind of charmed life. No one seems willing to touch it, but every one knows what it means. It means, "The Lord is coming!" It was a common salutation.

When one Christian met another in those days he said, *Maranatha!*

When one wrote a letter to his friend in those days he often wrote at the end of the page, *Maranatha!* It was a sort of fraternal password. And Paul wanted his friends in Corinth to know that he was still rejoicing in the expectation that the Lord was coming. Maranatha was the slogan that the soldiers of Jesus repeated one to another as they went forth to the conquest of the world. They braced themselves for the great battle by reminding themselves that the Lord was coming. Maranatha was a sort of mystical signal by which they understood one another. When they went into their meetings, when they met before daybreak in some secret place, that was the word that gained them admission. It was a word that was used at the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

We have a volume entitled *The Teaching of the Twelve,* that was written not far from the middle of the second century. In that book we are told that it was the custom, in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, to offer a prayer of thanksgiving, ending with the word Maranatha! And so the celebration of the Lord's Supper came to have a triumphant tone, by the mere repetition of the word *Maranatha.* That explains why our translators have left the word unchanged in their revisions of the Bible. What a difference between the Apostolic Church and the church of the present! There was a spirit of expectancy in

the early church that we do not possess; a mood of anticipation to which we are strangers. We do not say to one another, *Maranatha!*

The Apostolic Church was a radiant church, but ours is not especially radiant. I have in my library a little book called *The Lost Radiance.* It was written by a brilliant Oxford professor, and in it he refers to the very thing of which I am speaking: That the Apostolic Church was jubilant.

Open to the Thessalonians and you will find them described as "turning from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for his Son from heaven." Open to the Corinthians, and you will find the apostle telling them that they come behind in no gift; waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Open to the Philippians, and you will find him saying, "Our conversation is in the heavens, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." Open to the Epistle to the Hebrews, and you will find it said, "Jesus Christ, also, having been offered for our sins, shall appear the second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him."

And so I might recite numberless passages. Without doubt the New Testament teaches the return of the Lord; and without doubt the early disciples were filled with that hope.

Then what has become of that hope? It has been retained by some. By others it has been abandoned because of four things: (1) Because of the mystery

that enwraps it; (2) because of what they conceive as the long delay; (3) because of the extravagances with which some people have taught it; and (4) because of the difficulties that it is thought this return involves.

In the first place, as to the mystery: I have looked at the promises of the Lord's return, and I cannot find one that is not direct, specific, categorical, and plain. This cannot be said of all promises in the Bible. There are some that are mystical and hypothetical and hard to understand; but not so in respect of the Lord's promised return. That is made as plain as language can make it. If I am leaving for a time and still assure my friends I shall be back again, they know what I mean, and they rely on my word. And yet one hundred things might intervene to prevent my coming. Not so with Jesus. There is nothing that can occur to interfere with his promise; and he has said, "If I go away, I will come again." So this answers the objection that this promise is mysterious. It is the most specific promise in all the Bible, and is qualified by not a single contingency. It is the plainest of all his promises.

In the next place, the long delay; for without doubt the earlier disciples thought the Lord would return within their generation. It was thought by Paul, at least, as reflected in his earlier Epistles. In this he was mistaken, as were those who read his Epistles. Jesus did not come in their generation, and he has not come yet. And so the subject of the return of the

Lord became a cause of derision from the first. People said: "Where is the promise of his coming? for from the day that our fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." To which Peter replied that "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years; and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promises as some count slackness, but is long-suffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." That is what Peter said. And the meaning is that our thoughts are not as God's thoughts, nor our ways as his ways. If the Lord had come in those days, then everything would be changed, and those who have come into the Christian experience since that time, including ourselves, would not be here, and would not know about him. But the Lord will come. That is what Peter said. That is, the promises and purposes of God remain unchanged.

So much for the long delay. But the fact remains that each passing year must bring us closer to the great finale. The promise of the coming of the Redeemer stretched out over four thousand years, and during all that time faith in the promise lived in the hearts of the faithful. In every generation there were mothers who ardently trusted that their sons would be the promised Messiah. Eventually he came, and the promise was fulfilled. Though the world did not recognize him at the time, we look back and see that these promises were fulfilled in the minutest detail.

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So will it be with all the promises of the Lord. We may be assured of that.

Another reason why this truth has been neglected by many is because of the extravagances with which some people have spoken of it. It has been worked out in detail as to time and manner, and rational people have revolted. They have said that any subject that can be involved in such absurdity is a mischievous and dangerous subject, and, therefore, it had better be forgotten.

But this can be said of all other truths in the Bible. The ordinance of baptism is a simple ordinance, and yet it has been invested by some with all manner of absurdities. Whereas it was intended to be administered only by immersion and as a testimony of an inner experience, and, therefore, to those only who understand, it has been changed into numerous forms and administered to all manner of people and invested with a regenerating power. Yet faithful people cling to the ordinance in spite of all its abuses.

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper is a simple observance, and is meant simply to keep in remembrance the death of Jesus, and to be observed until he himself shall return. But this ordinance has been greatly abused and elevated into an extravagant place in the worship of some people. They teach us that when the bread is blessed, in some mysterious manner it is transformed into the actual body of Christ; and that when the cup is blessed it is transmuted into the

actual blood of Christ; and this in spite of every analysis to which these emblems may be subjected. They call it transubstantiation; that the very substance both of the bread and of the wine is transformed. That is what the Catholics hold, and the Catholics are the most numerous single body of Christian people in all the earth. The Lutherans hold a slightly different view. They call it consubstantiation, which means that, though the actual substance of the emblems is not changed, in some manner the body and blood of Christ are added thereto. And the Lutherans, we understand, are the second largest body of Christian people in the world.

Now, both these things are absurdities to us; and yet we still profess to hold to the simple memorial feast of the Lord's Supper. Then why not do so in respect of the return of the Lord, in spite of the absurdities with which it is sometimes taught, and that by ignorant people? We think the Bible idea of a church is simple, specific, and plain; that it consists of ordinary people who have come to a knowledge of Jesus by personal faith, and who have professed that faith by immersion; testifying to their faith by observing the Lord's Supper, and endeavoring to work in the way of the Lord and publishing his gospel to others.

But some people have an entirely different idea of a church—that people are brought into it not by their own faith but by the faith of their parents; that it is a closed organization, a channel through which the

grace of the Lord proceeds; and that unless one belongs to that church, in some manner he is entirely outside the covenant promises of the Lord. That is an absurdity to us; and yet we hold to our simple idea of a church, in spite of all the folly that is taught by others. Then why not also in respect of the evident teaching of the Bible concerning the coming of the Lord? I know that absurdity is taught respecting the second coming by those who believe in the doctrine, but I can match all their absurdities by the extravagances of those who deny it.

I have in my library a volume in which the author tries to reply to these things, and he calls his work *The Madness of the Second Coming.* If the extravagant things he selects are said, then it is madness indeed. But they no more illustrate this teaching, than the follies of Alexander Dowie or the ravings of the House of David represent the good things we believe as the teaching of the Lord. So much, therefore, in respect of the abuses of this subject.

A further reason why some people pass this by is because of the difficulties that they think the return of the Lord would involve. I fear I have been halted on this basis myself. I have said to myself: "How can these things be? And if the Lord should come to one place he would not be coming to another; and this world as a whole would not see him; and if he issued his word in one part of the world, it would not be the same in all others; and if people wanted to see him,

they would have to organize excursions and pilgrimages to go where he is." But I am changing my thought.

In the first place, if the Lord makes a promise, who am I to lay out its details and tell him? I do not understand how it can be; but in the vital things of Christian experience I am a man of faith. I do not understand how a belief in him lifts the penalty of sin, but I believe it just the same. The sacred promise lies with him, and it works. Then I have come to a better idea of the universe. So many strange things are taking place in this day that nothing seems to be impossible. The wonders we have recently witnessed are not achievements of men but revelations of God. They are promises that he has had in mind for us during all the ages, but has just released them to us in these last days. They are disclosures. It has always been possible for people to see through the human body; always possible to fly across the Atlantic; always possible to talk through the air without any connecting medium; always possible to see people round the world. But these things were not practised because they were not disclosed until yesterday. But now they are here, and they will remain until the end of eternity.

I read a strange thing a while ago. A body of engineers was holding a meeting in London, England, and a similar body of 1,500 engineers was assembled in New York at the very same hour. They were adjusted to the radio with the television. A man in

London presided, and first introduced a man in that meeting. That man spoke so that the people in New York both saw and heard him, and the applause which occurred sometimes broke out in New York before it broke out in London. Then the chairman in London introduced a man in the New York meeting, and he arose and spoke so that he was distinctly seen and heard by both groups; and so on until three speakers had addressed the meeting from both groups. Then the chairman, still in London, casually said: "We are glad to have Mr. Blank with us in this conference, and it may be that he has a word to speak." And this man in New York arose and offered an impromptu resolution! Can you think of anything more wonderful than that? Well, that is our kind of world.

Then I say that this most unlikely promise of the Lord can be fulfilled; and that, to the very last letter. The wonders on which you and I look are disclosures instead of inventions. They are revelations of the Lord unto our life. They are appearances. They reveal his presence. And still people say, "Where is the promise of his presence?" I do not see why the Lord, who has revealed all these things, cannot some day reveal himself; and that so we surely shall know him; and so we shall hear him; and so we shall see him. That will be the final coming of the Lord.

But some one will say, "When shall these things be?" I do not know. I did not know when the airship was coming until the thing was here. I did not

know when the radio was coming until it burst in upon us. I do not know when the Lord will reveal his presence, but I know that he will. And I recall the incident that is told of Robert McCheyne. He was talking with some friends one time, and he said, "Do you think Christ will come before night?" And, one after another they said, "I think not." Then said Mr. McCheyne, "In such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." And that will be literally true.

So I stop. I am sure that what I have said is of truth in the Bible. I am sure it ought to be said, and I am sure that no time is so fitting as when we sit around the table of the Lord where we are bidden to memorialize his death until he come. I feel that in all these years I have been true to the things of the Bible, except in respect of this truth; and I want to be able to look all people in the face, and to declare to you the whole truth of God. So I hold up this truth and say, with much wiser people, that as long as this Supper is observed, we give a tacit testimony to this truth. But that is not enough; it must be accepted as the blessed hope of the church. *Maranatha!* The Lord cometh! I do not know how; I do not know when; but every other promise of the Lord has been fulfilled, and so must also this.

Maranatha!

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